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MESSIRE PIERRE DE BOURDEILLE
SEIGNEUR DE BRANTOME.

J. v. Schley sculp. 1740

The Reign and Amours of the Bourbon Regimé

A Brilliant Description of the Courts of Louis XVI, Amours, Debauchery, Intrigues, and State Secrets, including Suppressed and Confiscated MSS.



The Book of the Illustrious Dames

BY

PIERRE DE BOURDEILLE, ABBÉ DE BRANTÔME

WITH INTRODUCTORY ESSAY BY

C.-A. SAINTE-BEUVE

Unexpurgated Rendition into English

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INTRODUCTION.[1]

THE title, "Vie des Dames Illustres," given habitually to one volume of Brantôme's Works, is not that which was chosen by its author. It was given by his first editor fifty years after his death; Brantôme himself having called his work "The Book of the Ladies."

One of his earliest commentators, Castelnaud, almost a cotemporary, says of him in his Memoirs: —

"Pierre de Bourdeille, Abbé de Brantôme, author of volumes of which I have availed myself in various parts of this history, used his quality as one of those warrior abbés who were called *Abbates Milites* under the second race of our kings; never ceasing for all that to follow arms and the Court, where his services won him the Collar of the Order and the dignity of gentleman of the Bedchamber to the King.

"He frequented, with unusual esteem for his courage and intelligence, the principal Courts of Europe, such as Spain, Portugal (where the king honoured him with his Order), Scotland, and those of the Princes of Italy. He went to Malta, seeking an occasion to distinguish himself, and after that lost none in our wars of France. But, although he managed perfectly all the great captains of his time and belonged to them by alliance of friendship, fortune was ever contrary to

[1] Taken chiefly from the Essays preceding the various editions of Brantôme's works published in the 18th and 19th centuries; some of which are anonymous; the more recent being those of M. H. Vignaud and M. Henri Moland. — TR.

him; so that he never obtained a position worthy, not of his merits only, but of a name so illustrious as his.

"It was this that made him of a rather bad humour in his retreat at Brantôme, where he set himself to compose his books in different frames of mind, according as the persons who recurred to his memory stirred his bile or touched his heart. It is to be wished that he had written a discourse on himself alone, like other seigneurs of his time. He would then have shown us much, if nothing were omitted in it; but perhaps he abstained from doing this in order not to declare his inclinations for the House of Lorraine at the very moment of the ruin of all its schemes; for he was greatly attached to that house, and it appears in various places that he had more respect than affection for the House of Bourbon. It was this that made him take part against the Salic law, in behalf of Queen Marguerite, whom he esteemed infinitely, and whom he saw, with regret, deprived of the Crown of France.

"In many other matters he gives out sentiments which have more of the courtier than the abbé; indeed to be a courtier was his principal profession, as it still is with the greater part of the abbés of the present day; and in view of this quality we must pardon various little liberties which would be less pardonable in a sworn historian.

"I do not speak of the volume of the 'Dames Galantes' in order not to condemn the memory of a nobleman whose other Works have rendered him worthy of so much esteem; I attribute the crime of that book to the dissolute habits of the Court of his time, about which more terrible tales could be told than those he relates.

"There is something to complain of in the method with which he writes; but perhaps the name of 'Notes' may cover this defect. However that may be, we can gather from

him much and very important knowledge on our History; and France is so indebted to him for this labour that I do not hesitate to say that the services of his sword must yield in value to those of his pen. He had much wit and was well read in Letters. In youth he was very pleasing; but I have heard those who knew him intimately say that the griefs of his old age lay heavier upon him than his arms, and were more displeasing than the toils and fatigues of war by sea or land. He regretted his past days, the loss of friends, and he saw nothing that could equal the Court of the Valois, in which he was born and bred. . ."

"The family of Bourdeille is not only illustrious in temporal prosperities, but it is remarkable throughout antiquity for the valour of its ancestors. King Charlemagne held it in great esteem, which he showed by choosing, when the splendid abbey of Brantôme was founded in Périgord, that the Seigneur de Bourdeille should be associated in that pious work and be, with him, the founder of the Monastery. He therefore made him its patron, and obliged his posterity to defend it against all who might molest the monks and hinder them in the enjoyment of their property.

"If we may rely on ancient deeds [*pancartes*] still in possession of this family, we must accord it a first rank among those which claim to be descended from kings, inasmuch as they carry back its origin to Marcomir, King of France, and Tiloa Bourdelia, daughter of a king of England.

"The same old deeds relate that Nicanor, son of this Marcomir, being appealed to by the people of Aquitaine to assist them in throwing off the Roman yoke, and having come with an army very near to Bordeaux, was compelled to withdraw by the violence of the Romans, who were stronger than he, and also by a tempest that arose in the sea. Nicanor cast anchor at an island, uninhabited on account of the wild beasts

that peopled it, and especially certain griffins, animals with four feet, and heads and wings like eagles.

"He had no sooner set foot on land with his men than he was forced to fight these monsters, and after battling with them a long time, not without loss of soldiers, he succeeded in vanquishing them. With his own hand he killed the largest and fiercest of them all, and cut off his paws. This victory greatly rejoiced all the neighbouring countries, which had suffered much damage from these beasts.

"On account of this affair, Nicanor was ever after surnamed 'The Griffin' and honoured by every one, like Hercules when he killed the Stymphalides in Arcadia, those birds of prey that feed on human flesh. This is the origin of the arms which the Seigneurs de Brantôme bear to this day, to wit: Or, two griffins' paws gules, onglée azure, counter barred."

Pierre de Bourdeille, third son of François, Vicomte de Bourdeille and Anne de Vivonne de la Châtaignerie, was born in the Périgord in 1537, under the reign of François I. The family of Bourdeille is one of the most ancient and respected in the Périgord, which province borders on Gascony and echoes, if we may say so, the caustic tongue and rambling, restless temperaments that flourish on the banks of the Garonne. "Not to boast of myself," says Brantôme, "I can assert that none of my race have ever been home-keeping; they have spent as much time in travels and wars as any, no matter who they be, in France."

As for his father, Brantôme gives an amusing account of him as a true Gascon seigneur. He began life by running away from home to go to the wars in Italy, and roam the world as an adventurer. He was, says Brantôme, "a jovial fellow, who could say his word and talk familiarly to the

greatest personages." Pope Julius II. took a fancy to him. "One day they were playing cards together and the pope won from my father three hundred crowns and his horses, which were very fine, and all his equipments. After he had lost all, he said: '*Chadieu bénit!*' (that was his oath when he was angry; when he was good-natured he swore: '*Chardon bénit!*') — '*Chadieu bénit!* pope, play me five hundred crowns against one of my ears, redeemable in eight days. If I don't redeem it I'll give you leave to cut it off, and eat it if you like.' The pope took him at his word; and confessed afterwards that if my father had not redeemed his ear, he would not have cut it off, but he would have forced him to keep him company. They began to play again, and fortune willed that my father won back everything except a fine courser, a pretty little Spanish horse, and a handsome mule. The pope cut short the game and would not play any more. My father said to him: 'Hey! *Chadieu!* pope, leave me my horse for money' (for he was very fond of him) 'and keep the courser, who will throw you and break your neck, for he is too rough for you; and keep the mule too, and may she rear and break your leg!' The pope laughed so he could not stop himself. At last, getting his breath, he cried out: 'I'll do better; I'll give you back your two horses, but not the mule, and I'll give you two other fine ones if you will keep me company as far as Rome and stay with me there two months; we'll pass the time well, and it shall not cost you anything.' My father answered: '*Chadieu!* pope, if you gave me your mitre and your cap, too, I would not do it; I would n't quit my general and my companions just for your pleasure. Good-bye to you, rascal.' The pope laughed, while all the great captains, French and Italians, who always spoke so reverently to his Holiness, were amazed and laughed too at such liberty of language. When the pope was on the point of

leaving, he said to him, 'Ask what you want of me and you shall have it,' thinking my father would ask for his horses; but my father did not ask anything, except for a license and dispensation to eat butter in Lent, for his stomach could never get accustomed to olive and nut oil. The pope gave it him readily, and sent him a bull, which was long to be seen in the archives of our house."

The young Pierre de Bourdeille spent the first years of his existence at the Court of Marguerite de Valois, sister of François I., to whom his mother was lady-in-waiting. After the death of that princess in 1549 he came to Paris to begin his studies, which he ended at Poitiers about the year 1556.

Being the youngest of the family he was destined if not for the Church at least for church benefices, which he never lacked through life. An elder brother, Captain de Bourdeille, a valiant soldier, having been killed at the siege of Hesdin by a cannon-ball which took off his head and the arm that held a glass of water he was drinking on the breach, King Henri II. desired, in recognition of so glorious a death, to do some favour to the Bourdeille family; and the abbey of Brantôme falling vacant at this very time, he gave it to the young Pierre de Bourdeille, then sixteen years old, who henceforth bore the name of Seigneur and Abbé de Brantôme, abbreviated after a while to Brantôme, by which name he is known to posterity. In a few legal deeds of the period, especially family documents, he is mentioned as "the reverend father in God, the Abbé de Brantôme."

Brantôme had possessed his abbey about a year when he began to dream of going to the wars in Italy; this was the high-road to glory for the young French nobles, ever since Charles VIII. had shown them the way. Brantôme obtained from François I. permission to cut timber in the forest of Saint-Trieix; this cut brought him in five hundred golden

crowns, with which he departed in 1558, "bearing," he says, "a matchlock arquebuse, a fine powder-horn from Milan, and mounted on a hackney worth a hundred crowns, followed by six or seven gentlemen, soldiers themselves, well set-up, armed and mounted the same, but on good stout nags."

He went first to Geneva, and there he saw the Calvinist emigration; continuing his way he stayed at Milan and Ferrara, reaching Rome soon after the death of Paul IV. There he was welcomed by the Grand-Prior of France, François de Guise, who had brought his brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine, to assist in the election of a new pontiff.

This was the epoch of the Renaissance, — that epoch when the knightly king made all Europe resound with the fame of his amorous and warlike prowess; when Titian and Primaticcio were leaving on the walls of palaces their immortal handiwork; when Jean Goujon was carving his figures on the fountains and the façades of the Louvre; when Rabelais was inciting that mighty roar of laughter which, in itself, is a whole human comedy; when the Marguerite of Marguerites was telling in her "Heptameron" those charming tales of love. François I. dies; his son succeeds him; Protestantism makes serious progress. Montgomery kills Henri II., and François II. ascends the throne only to live a year; and then it is that Marie Stuart leaves France, the tears in her eyes, sadly singing as the beloved shores over which she had reigned so short a while recede from sight: "Farewell, my pleasant land of France, farewell!"

Returning to France without any warrior fame but closely attached by this time to the Guises, Brantôme took to a Court life. He assisted in a tournament between the grand-prior, François de Guise, disguised as an Egyptian woman,

"having on her arm a little monkey swaddled as an infant, which kept its baby face there is no telling how," and M. de Nemours, dressed as a bourgeoise housekeeper wearing at her belt more than a hundred keys attached to a thick silver chain. He witnessed the terrible scene of the execution of the Huguenot nobles at Amboise (March, 1560); was at Orléans when the Prince de Condé was arrested, and at Poissy for the reception of the Knights of Saint-Michel. In short, he was no more "home-keeping" in France than in foreign parts.

Charles IX., then about ten years old, succeeded his brother François II. in December, 1560. The following year Duc François de Guise was commissioned to escort his niece, Marie Stuart, to Scotland. Brantôme went with them, saw the threatening reception given to the queen by her sullen subjects, and then returned with the duke by way of England. In London, Queen Elizabeth greeted them most graciously, deigning to dance more than once with Duc François, to whom she said: "Monsieur mon prieur" (that was how she called him) "I like you very much, but not your brother, who tore my town of Calais from me."

Brantôme returned to France at the moment when the edict of Saint-Germain granting to Protestants the exercise of their religion was promulgated, and he was struck by the change of aspect presented by the Court and the whole nation. The two armed parties were face to face; the Calvinists, scarcely escaped from persecution, seemed certain of approaching triumph; the Prince de Condé, with four hundred gentlemen, escorted the preachers to Charenton through the midst of a quivering population. "Death to papists!" — the very cry Brantôme had first heard on landing in Scotland, where it sounded so ill to his ears — was beginning to be heard in France, to which the cry of "Death to the



Duc François de Guise

Huguenots!" responded in the breasts of an irritated populace. Brantôme did not hesitate as to the side he should take, — he was abbé, and attached to the Guises; he fought through the war with them, took part in the sieges of Blois, Bourges, and Rouen, was present at the battle of Dreux, where he lost his protector the grand-prior, and attached himself henceforth to François de Guise, the elder, whom he followed to the siege of Orléans in 1563, where the duke was assassinated by Poltrot de Méré under circumstances which Brantôme has vividly described in his chapter on that great captain.

In 1564 Brantôme entered the household of the Duc d'Anjou (afterwards Henri III.) as gentleman-in-waiting to the prince, on a salary of six hundred livres a year. But, being seized again by his passion for distant expeditions, he engaged during the same year in an enterprise conducted by Spaniards against the Emperor of Morocco, and went with the troops of Don Garcia of Toledo to besiege and take the towns on the Barbary coast. He returned by way of Lisbon, pleased the king of Portugal, Sebastiano, who conferred upon him his Order of the Christ, and went from there to Madrid, where Queen Élisabeth gave him the cordial welcome on which he plumes himself in his Discourse upon that princess. He was commissioned by her to carry to her mother, Catherine de' Medici, the desire she felt to have an interview with her; which interview took place at Bayonne, Brantôme not failing to be present.

In that same year, 1565, Sultan Suleiman attacked the island of Malta. The grand-master of the Knights of Saint-John, Parisot de La Valette, called for the help of all Christian powers. The French government had treaties with the Ottoman Porte which did not allow it to come openly to the assistance of the Knights; but many gentlemen, both

Catholic and Protestant, took part as volunteers. Among them went Brantôme, naturally. "We were," he says, "about three hundred gentlemen and eight hundred soldiers. M. de Strozzi and M. de Bussac were with us, and to them we deferred our own wills. It was only a little troop, but as active and valiant as ever left France to fight the Infidel."

While at Malta he seems to have had a fancy to enter the Order of the Knights of Saint-John, but Philippe Strozzi dissuaded him. "He gave me to understand," says Brantôme, "that I should do wrong to abandon the fine fortune that awaited me in France, whether from the hand of my king, or from that of a beautiful, virtuous lady, and rich, to whom I was just then servant and welcome guest, so that I had hope of marrying her."

He left Malta on a galley of the Order, intending to go to Naples, according to a promise he had made to the "beautiful and virtuous lady," the Marchesa del Vasto. But a contrary wind defeated his project, which he did not renounce without regret. In after years he considered this mischance a strong feature in his unfortunate destiny. "It was possible," he says, "that by means of Mme. la marquise I might have encountered good luck, either by marriage or otherwise, for she did me the kindness to love me. But I believe that my unhappy fate was resolved to bring me back to France, where never did fortune smile upon me; I have always been duped by vain expectations; I have received much honour and esteem, but of property and rank, none at all. Companions of mine who would have been proud had I deigned to speak to them at Court or in the chamber of the king or queen, have long been advanced before me; I see them round as pumpkins and highly exalted, though I will not, for all that, defer to them to the length of my thumb-nail. That proverb, 'No one is a prophet in his

own country,' was made for me. If I had served foreign sovereigns as I have my own I should now be as loaded with wealth and dignities as I am with sorrows and years. Patience! if Fate has thus woven my days, I curse her! If my princes have done it, I send them all to the devil, if they are not there already."

But when he started from Malta Brantôme was still young, being then only twenty-eight years of age. "Jogging, meandering, vagabondizing," as he says, he reached Venice; there he thought of going into Hungary in search of the Turks, whom he had not been able to meet in Malta. But the death of Sultan Suleiman stopped the invasion for one year at least, and Brantôme reluctantly decided to return to France, passing through Piedmont, where he gave a proof of his disinterestedness, which he relates in his sketch of Marguerite, Duchesse de Savoie.

Reaching his own land he found the war he had been so far to seek without encountering it; whereupon he recruited a company of foot-soldiers, and took part in the third civil war with the title of commander of two companies, though in fact there was but one. Shortly after this he resigned his command to serve upon the staff of Monsieur, commander-in-chief of the royal army. After the battle of Jarnac (March 15, 1569), being sick of an intermittent fever, he retired to his abbey, where his presence throughout the troubles was far from useless. But always more eager for distant expeditions than for the dulness of civil war, Brantôme let himself be tempted by a grand project of Maréchal Strozzi, who dreamed of nothing less than a descent on South America and the conquest of Peru. Brantôme was commissioned in 1571 to go to the port of Brouage and direct the preparations for the armament. It was this enterprise that prevented him from being present at the battle

of Lepanto (October 7, 1571). "I should have gone there resolutely, as did that brave M. de Grillon," he says, "if it had not been for M. de Strozzi, who amused me a whole year with that fine embarkation at Brouage, which ended in nothing but the ruin of our purses, — to those of us at least who owned the vessels." But if the duties which kept him at Brouage robbed him of the glory of being present at the greatest battle of the age, it also saved him from being a witness of the Saint Bartholomew.

The treaty of June 24, 1573, put an end to the siege of Rochelle and the fourth civil war. Charles IX. died on May 30, 1574. Monsieur, elected the year before to the throne of Poland, was in that distant country when the death of his brother made him king of France. He hastened to return. Brantôme went to meet him at Lyons and was one of the gentlemen of his Bedchamber from 1575 to 1583. During the years just passed Brantôme, besides the principal events already named in which he participated, took part in various little or great events in the daily life of the Court, such as: the quarrel of Sussy and Saint-Fal, the splendid disgrace of Bussy d'Amboise, the death and obsequies of Charles IX., the coronation of Henri III., etc. Throughout them all he played the part of interested spectator, of active supernumerary without importance; discontented at times and sulky, but always unable to make himself feared.

The years went by in this sterile round. He was now thirty-five years old. The hope of a great fortune was realized no more on the side of his king than on that of his beautiful, virtuous, and rich lady. He is, no doubt, "liked, known, and made welcome by the kings, his masters, by his queens and his princesses, and all the great seigneurs, who held him in such esteem that the name of Brantôme had great

renown." But he is not satisfied with the Court small-change in which his services are paid. He is vexed that his own lightheartedness is taken at its word; he would be very glad indeed if that love of liberty with which he decked himself were put to greater trials. Philosopher in spite of himself, he finds his disappointments all the more painful because of his own opinion of his merits. He sees men to whom he believes himself superior, preferred before him. "His companions, not equal to him," he says in the epitaph he composed for himself, "surpassed him in benefits received, in promotions and ranks, but never in virtue or in merit." And he adds, with posthumous resignation: "God be praised nevertheless for all, and for his sacred mercy!"

Meantime, perchance a queen, Catherine de' Medici or Marguerite de Valois, deigns to drop into his ear some trifling word which he relishes with delight. Henri de Guise [le Balafré], who was ten years younger than himself, called him "my son;" and the Baron de Montesquieu, the one that killed the Prince de Condé at Jarnac and was very much older than Brantôme, who had pulled him out of the water during certain aquatic games on the Seine, called him "father." Such were the familiarities with which he was treated.

He was, it is true, chevalier of the Order of Saint-Michel, but that was not enough to console his ambition. He complained that they degraded that honour, no longer reserved to the nobility of the sword. He thinks it bad, for instance, that it was granted to his neighbour, Michel de Montaigne. "We have seen," he says, "counsellors coming from the courts of parliament, abandoning robes and the square cap to drag a sword behind them, and at once the king decks them with the collar, without any pretext of their going to war.

This is what was given to the Sieur de Montaigne, who would have done much better to continue to write his Essays instead of changing his pen into a sword, which does not suit him. The Marquis de Trans obtained the Order very easily from the king for one of his neighbours, no doubt in derision, for he is a great joker." Brantôme always speaks very slightingly of Montaigne because the latter was of lesser nobility than his own; but that does not prevent the Sieur de Montaigne from being to our eyes a much greater man than the Seigneur de Brantôme.

Brantôme continued to follow the Court. He accompanied the queen-mother when she went in 1576 to Poitou to bring back the Duc d'Alençon, who was dabbling in plots. He accompanied her again when she conducted in 1578 her daughter Marguerite to Navarre; and at their solemn entry into Bordeaux he had the honour of being near them on the "scaffold," or, as we should say in the present day, the platform. He had also the luck to hear at Saint-Germain-en-Laye King Henri III. make during his dinner, in presence of the Duc de Joyeuse (on whose nuptials the fluent monarch was destined to spend a million), a discourse worthy of Cato against luxury and extravagance.

In 1582, his elder brother, André de Bourdeille, seneschal and governor of the Périgord, died. He left a son scarcely nine years old. Brantôme had obtained from King Henri III. a promise that he should hold those offices until the majority of his nephew, on condition of transmitting them at that time. The king confirmed this promise on several occasions during the last illness of André de Bourdeille. But at the latter's death it was discovered that he had bound himself in his daughter's marriage contract to resign those offices to his son-in-law. The king considered that he ought to respect this family arrangement. Brantôme was keenly hurt. "On

the second day of the year," he says, "as the king was returning from his ceremony of the Saint-Esprit, I made my complaint to him, more in anger than to implore him, as he well understood. He made me excuses, although he was my king. Among other reasons he said plainly that he could not refuse that resignation when presented to him, or he should be unjust. I made him no reply, except: 'Well, sire, I ought not to have put faith in you; a good reason never to serve you again as I have served you.' On which I went away much vexed. I met several of my companions, to whom I related everything. I protested and swore that if I had a thousand lives not one would I employ for a King of France. I cursed my luck, I cursed life, I loathed the king's favour, I despised with a curling lip those beggarly fellows loaded with royal favours who were in no wise as worthy of them as I. Hanging to my belt was the gilt key to the king's bedroom; I unfastened it and flung it from the Quai des Augustins, where I stood, into the river below. I never again entered the king's room; I abhorred it, and I swore never to set foot in it any more. I did not, however, cease to frequent the Court and to show myself in the room of the queen, who did me the honour to like me, and in those of her ladies and maids of honour and of the princesses, seigneurs, and princes, my good friends. I talked aloud about my displeasure, so that the king, hearing of what I said, sent me a few words by M. du Halde, his head *valet de chambre*. I contented myself with answering that I was the king's most obedient, and said no more."

Monsieur (the Duc d'Alençon) took notice of Brantôme, and made him his chamberlain. About this time it was that he began to compose for this prince the "Discourses" afterwards made into a book and called "Vies des Dames Galantes," which he dedicated to the Duc d'Alençon. The

latter died in 1584, — a loss that dashed once more the hopes of Brantôme and of others who, like him, had pinned their faith upon that prince. After all, Brantôme had some reason to complain of his evil star.

Then it was that Brantôme meditated vast and even criminal projects, which he himself has revealed to us: "I resolved to sell the little property I possessed in France and go off and serve that great King of Spain, very illustrious and noble remunerator of services rendered to him, not compelling his servitors to importune him, but done of his own free will and wise opinion, and out of just consideration. Whereupon I reflected and ruminated within myself that I was able to serve him well; for there is not a harbour nor a seaport from Picardy to Bayonne that I do not know perfectly, except those of Bretagne which I have not seen; and I know equally well all the weak spots on the coast of Languedoc from Grasse to Provence. To make myself sure of my facts, I had recently made a new tour to several of the towns, pretending to wish to arm a ship and send it on a voyage, or go myself. In fact, I had played my game so well that I had discovered half a dozen towns on these coasts easy to capture on their weak sides, which I knew then and which I still know. I therefore thought I could serve the King of Spain in these directions so well that I might count on obtaining the reward of great wealth and dignities. But before I banished myself from France I proposed to sell my estates and put the money in a bank of Spain or Italy. I also proposed, and I discoursed of it to the Comte de La Rochefoucauld, to ask leave of absence from the king that I might not be called a deserter, and to be relieved of my oath as a subject in order to go wherever I should find myself better off than in his kingdom. I believe he could not have refused my request; because every-

one is free to change his country and choose another. But however that might be, if he had refused me I should have gone all the same, neither more nor less like a valet who is angry with his master and wants to leave him; if the latter will not give him leave to go, it is not reprehensible to take it and attach himself to another master."

Thus reasoned Brantôme. He returns on several occasions to these lawless opinions; he argues, apropos of the Connétable de Bourbon and La Noue, against the scruples of those who are willing to leave their country, but not to take up arms against her. "I'faith!" he cries, "here are fine, scrupulous philosophers! Their quartan fevers! While I hold shyly back, pray who will feed me? Whereas if I bare my sword to the wind it will give me food and magnify my fame."

Such ideas were current in those days among the nobles, in whom the patriotic sentiment, long subordinated to that of caste, was only developed later. These projects of treachery should therefore not be judged altogether with the severity of modern ideas. Besides, Brantôme is working himself up; it does not belong to every one to produce such grand disasters as these he meditates. Moreover, thought is far from action; events may intervene. People call them fate or chance, but chance will often simply aid the secret impulses of conscience, and bind our will to that it chooses.

"Fine human schemes I made!" Brantôme resumes. "On the very point of their accomplishment the war of the League broke out and turmoiled things in such a way that no one would buy lands, for every man had trouble enough to keep what he owned, neither would he strip himself of money. Those who had promised to buy my property excused themselves. To go to foreign parts without resources was madness, — it would only have exposed me to all sorts

of misery; I had too much experience to commit that folly. To complete the destruction of my designs, one day, at the height of my vigor and jollity, a miserable horse, whose white skin might have warned me of nothing good, reared and fell over upon me breaking and crushing my loins, so that for four years I lay in my bed, maimed, impotent in every limb, unable to turn or move without torture and all the agony in the world; and since then my health has never been what it once was. Thus man proposes, and God disposes. God does all things for the best! It is possible that if I had realized my plans I should have done more harm to my country than the renegade of Algiers did to his; and because of it, I might have been perpetually cursed of God and man."

Consequently, this great scheme remained a dream; no one need ever have known anything about it if Brantôme himself had not taken pains to inform us of it with much complacency.

The cruel fall which stopped his guilty projects must have occurred in 1585. At the end of three years and a half of suffering he met, he tells us, "with a very great personage and operator, called M. Saint-Christophe, whom God raised up for my good and cure, who succeeded in relieving me after many other doctors had failed." As soon as he was nearly well he began once more to travel. It does not appear that he frequented the Court after the death of Catherine de' Medici, which took place in January, 1589; but he was present, in that year, at the baptism of the posthumous son of Henri de Guise, whom the Parisians adopted after the father's murder at Blois, and named *Paris*. Agrippa d'Aubigné, in his caricature of the Procession of the League, gives Brantôme a small place as bearer of bells. But was he really there? It seems doubtful; he makes somewhere the judicious

reflection that: "One may well be surprised that so many French nobles put themselves on the side of the League, for if it had got the upper hand it is very certain that the clergy would have deprived them of church property and wiped their lips forever of it, which result would have cut the wings of their extravagance for a very long while." The secular Abbé de Brantôme had therefore as good reasons for not being a Leaguer as for not being a Huguenot.

In 1590 he went to make his obeisance to Marguerite, Queen of Navarre, then confined in the Château d'Usson in Auvergne. He presented to her his "discourse" on "Spanish Rhodomontades," perhaps also a first copy of the life of that princess (which appears in this volume), and he also showed her the titles of the other books he had composed. He was so enchanted with the greeting Queen Marguerite, la Reine Margot, gave him, "the sole remaining daughter of the noble house of France, the most beautiful, most noble, grandest, most generous, most magnanimous, and most accomplished princess in the world" (when Brantôme praises he does not do it by halves), that he promised to dedicate to her the entire collection of his works, — a promise he faithfully fulfilled.

His health, now decidedly affected, confined more and more to his own home this indefatigable rover, who had, as he said, "the nature of a minstrel who prefers the house of others to his own." Condemned to a sedentary life, he used his activity as he could. He caused to be built the noble castle of Richemont, with much pains and at great expense. He grew quarrelsome and litigious; brought suits against his relations, against his neighbours, against his monks, whom he accused of ingratitude. By his will he bequeathed his lawsuits to his heirs, and forbade each and all to compromise them.

Difficult to live with, soured, dissatisfied with the world, he was not, it would seem, in easy circumstances. He did not spare posterity the recital of his plaints: "Favours, grandeurs, boasts, and vanities, all the pleasant things of the good old days are gone like the wind. Nothing remains to me but to *have been* all that; sometimes that memory pleases me, and sometimes it vexes me. Nearing a decrepit old age, the worst of all woes, nearing, too, a poverty which cannot be cured as in our flourishing years when nought is impossible, repenting me a hundred thousand times for the fine extravagances I committed in other days, and regretting I did not save enough then to support me now in feeble age, when I lack all of which I once possessed too much, — I see, with a bursting heart, an infinite number of paltry fellows raised to rank and riches, while Fortune, treacherous and blind that she is, feeds me on air and then deserts and mocks me. If she would only put me quickly into the hands of death I would still forgive her the wrongs she has done me. But there is the worst of it; we can neither live nor die as we wish. Therefore, let destiny do as it will, never shall I cease to curse it from heart and lip. And worst of all do I detest old age weighed down by poverty. As the queen-mother said to me one day when I had the honour to speak to her on this subject about another person, 'Old age brings us inconveniences enough without the additional burden of poverty; the two united are the height of misery, against which there is one only sovereign cure, and that is death. Happy he who finds it when he reaches fifty-six, for after that our life is but labour and sorrow, and we eat but the bread of ashes, as saith the prophet.'"

He continued, however, to write, retracing all that he had seen and garnered either while making his campaigns with the great captains of his time, or in gossiping with idle gen-

tlemen in the halls of the Louvre. It was thus he composed his biographical and anecdotical volumes, which he retouched and rewrote at intervals, making several successive copies. That he had the future of his writings much at heart, in spite of a scornful air of indifference which he sometimes assumed, appears very plainly from the following clause in his will:

"I will," he says, "and I expressly charge my heirs to cause to be printed my Books, which I have composed from my mind and invention with great toil and trouble, written by my hand, and transcribed clearly by that of Mataud, my hired secretary; the which will be found in five volumes covered with velvet, black, tan, green, blue, and a large volume, which is that of 'The Ladies,' covered with green velvet, and another covered with vellum and gilded thereon, which is that of 'The Rhodomontades.' They will be found in one of my wicker trunks, carefully protected. Fine things will be found in them, such as tales, discourses, histories, and witticisms; which no one can disdain, it seems to me, if once they are placed under his nose and eyes. In order to have them printed according to my fancy, I charge with that purpose Madame la Comtesse de Duretal, my dear niece, or some other person she may choose. And to do this I order that enough be taken from my whole property to pay the costs of the said printing, and my heirs are not to divide or use my property until this printing is provided for. It is not probable that it will cost much; for the printers, when they cast their eyes upon the books, would pay to print them instead of exacting money; for they do print many gratis that are not worth as much as mine. I can boast of this; for I have shown them, at least in part, to several among that trade, who offered to print them for nothing. But I do not choose that they be printed during my life. Above all, I will that the said printing be in fine, large letters, in a great volume to

make the better show, with license from the king, who will give it readily; or without license, if that can be. Care must also be taken that the printer does not put on another name than mine; otherwise I shall be frustrated of all my trouble and of the fame that is my due. I also will that the first book that issues from the press shall be given as a gift, well bound and covered in velvet, to Queen Marguerite, my very illustrious mistress, who did me the honour to read some of my writings, and who thought them fine and esteemed them."

This will was made about the year 1609. On the 15th of July, 1614, Brantôme died, after living his last years in complete oblivion; he was buried, according to his wishes, in the chapel of his château of Richemont. In spite of his express directions, neither the Comtesse de Duretal nor any other of his heirs executed the clause in his will relating to the publication of his works. Possibly they feared it might create some scandal, or it may be that they could not obtain the royal license. The manuscripts remained in the château of Richemont. Little by little, as time went on, they attracted attention; copies were made which found their way to the cabinets and libraries of collectors. They were finally printed in Holland; and the first volume, which appeared in Leyden from the press of Jean Sambix the younger, sold by F. Foppons, Brussels, 1665, was that which here follows: "The Book of the Ladies," called by the publisher, not by Brantôme, "Lives of Illustrious Dames."

It is not easy to distinguish the exact periods at which Brantôme wrote his works. "The Book of the Ladies," first and second parts, — *Dames Illustres* and *Dames Galantes,* — were evidently the first written; then followed "The Lives of Great and Illustrious French Captains," "Lives of Great Foreign Captains," "Anecdotes concerning Duels," "The

Rhodomontades," and "Spanish Oaths." Brantôme did not write his Memoirs, properly so-called; his biographical facts and incidents are scattered throughout the above-named volumes.

The following translation of the "Book of the Ladies" does not pretend to imitate Brantôme's style. To do so would seem an affectation in English, and attract attention to itself which it is always desirable to avoid in translating. Wherever a few of Brantôme's quaint turns of phrase are given, it is only as they fall naturally into English.

THE BOOK OF THE LADIES.

DISCOURSE I.

ANNE DE BRETAGNE, QUEEN OF FRANCE.

INASMUCH as I must speak of ladies, I do not choose to speak of former dames, of whom the histories are full; that would be blotting paper in vain, for enough has been written about them, and even the great Boccaccio has made a fine book solely on that subject [*De claris mulieribus*].

I shall begin therefore with our queen, Anne de Bretagne, the most worthy and honourable queen that has ever been since Queen Blanche, mother of the King Saint-Louis, and very sage and virtuous.

This Queen Anne was the rich heiress of the duchy of Bretagne, which was held to be one of the finest of Christendom, and for that reason she was sought in marriage by the greatest persons. M. le Duc d'Orléans, afterwards King Louis XII., in his young days courted her, and did for her sake his fine feats of arms in Bretagne, and even at the battle of Saint Aubin, where he was taken prisoner fighting on foot at the head of his infantry. I have heard say that this capture was the reason why he did not espouse her then; for thereon intervened Maximilian, Duke of Austria, since emperor, who married her by the proxy of his uncle the Prince of Orange in the great church at Nantes. But King Charles VIII., having advised with his council that it was

not good to have so powerful a seigneur encroach and get a footing in his kingdom, broke off a marriage that had been settled between himself and Marguerite of Flanders, took the said Anne from Maximilian, her affianced, and wedded her himself; so that every one conjectured thereon that a marriage thus made would be luckless in issue.

Now if Anne was desired for her property, she was as much so for her virtues and merits; for she was beautiful and agreeable; as I have heard say by elderly persons who knew her, and according to her portrait, which I have seen from life; resembling in face the beautiful Demoiselle de Châteauneuf, who has been so renowned at the Court for her beauty; and that is sufficient to tell the beauty of Queen Anne as I have heard it portrayed to the queen mother [Catherine de' Medici].

Her figure was fine and of medium height. It is true that one foot was shorter than the other the least in the world; but this was little perceived, and hardly to be noticed, so that her beauty was not at all spoilt by it; for I myself have seen very handsome women with that defect who yet were extreme in beauty, like Mme. la Princesse de Condé, of the house of Longueville.

So much for the beauty of the body of this queen. That of her mind was no less, because she was very virtuous, wise, honourable, pleasant of speech, and very charming and subtile in wit. She had been taught and trained by Mme. de Laval, an able and accomplished lady, appointed her governess by her father, Duc François. For the rest, she was very kind, very merciful, and very charitable, as I have heard my own folks say. True it is, however, that she was quick in vengeance and seldom pardoned whoever offended her maliciously; as she showed to the Maréchal de Gié for the affront he put upon her when the king, her lord and husband,

lay ill at Blois and was held to be dying. She, wishing to provide for her wants in case she became a widow, caused three or four boats to be laden on the River Loire with all her precious articles, furniture, jewels, rings and money,—and sent them to her city and château of Nantes. The said marshal, meeting these boats between Saumur and Nantes, ordered them stopped and seized, being much too wishful to play the good officer and servant of the Crown. But fortune willed that the king, through the prayers of his people, to whom he was indeed a true father, escaped with his life.

The queen, in spite of this luck, did not abstain from her vengeance, and having well brewed it, she caused the said marshal to be driven from Court. It was then that having finished a fine house at La Verger, he retired there, saying that the rain had come just in time to let him get under shelter in the beautiful house so recently built. But this banishment from Court was not all; through great researches which she caused to be made wherever he had been in command, it was discovered he had committed great wrongs, extortions and pillages, to which all governors are given; so that the marshal, having appealed to the courts of parliament, was summoned before that of Toulouse, which had long been very just and equitable, and not corrupt. There, his suit being viewed, he was convicted. But the queen did not wish his death, because, she said, death is a cure for all pains and woes, and being dead he would be too happy; she wished him to live as degraded and low as he had been great; so that he might, from the grandeur and height where he had been, live miserably in troubles, pains, and sadness, which would do him a hundred-fold more harm than death, for death lasted only a day, and mayhap only an hour, whereas his languishing would make him die daily.

Such was the vengeance of this brave queen. One day she

was so angry against M. d'Orléans that she could not for a long time be appeased. It was in this wise: the death of her son, M. le dauphin, having happened, King Charles, her husband, and she were in such despair that the doctors, fearing the debility and feeble constitution of the king, were alarmed lest such grief should do injury to his health; so they counselled the king to amuse himself, and the princes of the Court to invent new pastimes, games, dances, and mummeries in order to give pleasure to the king and queen; the which M. d'Orléans having undertaken, he gave at the Château d'Amboise a masquerade and dance, at which he did such follies and danced so gayly, as was told and read, that the queen, believing he felt this glee because, the dauphin being dead, he knew himself nearer to be King of France, was extremely angered, and showed him such displeasure that he was forced to escape from Amboise, where the Court then was, and go to his château of Blois. Nothing can be blamed in this queen except the sin of vengeance,—if vengeance is a sin,—because otherwise she was beautiful and gentle, and had many very laudable sides.

When the king, her husband, went to the kingdom of Naples [1494], and so long as he was there, she knew very well how to govern the kingdom of France with those whom the king had given to assist her; but she always kept her rank, her grandeur, and supremacy, and insisted, young as she was, on being trusted; and she made herself trusted, so that nothing was ever found to say against her.

She felt great regret for the death of King Charles [in 1498], as much for the friendship she bore him as for seeing herself henceforth but half a queen, having no children. And when her most intimate ladies, as I have been told on good authority, pitied her for being the widow of so great a king, and unable to return to her high estate,—for King

Louis [the Duc d'Orléans, her first lover] was then married to Jeanne de France, — she replied she would "rather be the widow of a king all her life than debase herself to a less than he; but still, she was not so despairing of happiness that she did not think of again being Queen of France, as she had been, if she chose." Her old love made her say so; she meant to relight it in the bosom of him in whom it was yet warm. And so it happened; for King Louis [XII.], having repudiated Jeanne, his wife, and never having lost his early love, took her in marriage, as we have seen and read. So here was her prophecy accomplished; she having founded it on the nature of King Louis, who could not keep himself from loving her, all married as she was, but looked with a tender eye upon her, being still Duc d'Orléans; for it is difficult to quench a great fire when once it has seized the soul.

He was a handsome prince and very amiable, and she did not hate him for that. Having taken her, he honoured her much, leaving her to enjoy her property and her duchy without touching it himself or taking a single louis; but she employed it well, for she was very liberal. And because the king made immense gifts, to meet which he must have levied on his people, which he shunned like the plague, she supplied his deficiencies; and there were no great captains of the kingdom to whom she did not give pensions, or make extraordinary presents of money or of thick gold chains when they went upon a journey; and she even made little presents according to quality; everybody ran to her, and few came away discontented. Above all, she had the reputation of loving her domestic servants, and to them she did great good.

She was the first queen to hold a great Court of ladies, such as we have seen from her time to the present day. Her suite was very large of ladies and young girls, for she

refused none; she even inquired of the noblemen of her Court whether they had daughters, and what they were, and asked to have them brought to her. I had an aunt de Bourdeille who had the honour of being brought up by her [Louise de Bourdeille, maid of honour to Queen Anne in 1494]; but she died at Court, aged fifteen years, and was buried behind the great altar of the church of the Franciscans in Paris. I saw the tomb and its inscription before that church was burned [in 1580.]

Queen Anne's Court was a noble school for ladies; she had them taught and brought up wisely; and all, taking pattern by her, made themselves wise and virtuous. Because her heart was great and lofty she wanted guards, and so formed a second band of a hundred gentlemen, — for hitherto there was only one; and the greater part of the said new guard were Bretons, who never failed, when she left her room to go to mass or to promenade, to await her on that little terrace at Blois, still called the Breton perch, "La Perche aux Bretons," she herself having named it so by saying when she saw them: "Here are my Bretons on their perch, awaiting me."

You may be sure that she did not lay by her money, but employed it well on all high things.

She it was, who built, out of great superbness, that fine vessel and mass of wood, called "La Cordelière," which attacked so furiously in mid-ocean the "Regent of England," grappling to her so closely that both were burned and nothing escaped, — not the people, nor anything else that was in them, so that no news was ever heard of them on land; which troubled the queen very much.[1]

The king honoured her so much that one day, it being reported to him that the law clerks at the Palais [de Justice]

[1] See Appendix.

and the students also were playing games in which there was talk of the king, his Court, and all the great people, he took no other notice than to say they needed a pastime, and he would let them talk of him and his Court, though not licentiously; but as for the queen, his wife, they should not speak of her in any way whatsoever; if they did he would have them hanged. Such was the honour he bore her.

Moreover, there never came to his Court a foreign prince or an ambassador that, after having seen and listened to them, he did not send them to pay their reverence to the queen; wishing the same respect to be shown to her as to him; and also, because he recognized in her a great faculty for entertaining and pleasing great personages, as, indeed, she knew well how to do; taking much pleasure in it herself; for she had very good and fine grace and majesty in greeting them, and beautiful eloquence in talking with them. Sometimes, amid her French speech, she would, to make herself more admired, mingle a few foreign words, which she had learned from M. de Grignaux, her chevalier of honour, who was a very gallant man who had seen the world, and was accomplished and knew foreign languages, being thereby very pleasant good company, and agreeable to meet. Thus it was that one day, Queen Anne having asked him to teach her a few words of Spanish to say to the Spanish ambassador, he taught her in joke a little indecency, which she quickly learned. The next day, while awaiting the ambassador, M. de Grignaux told the story to the king, who thought it good, understanding his gay and lively humour. Nevertheless he went to the queen, and told her all, warning her to be careful not to use those words. She was in such great anger, though the king only laughed, that she wanted to dismiss M. de Grignaux, and

showed him her displeasure for several days. But M. de Grignaux made her such humble excuses, telling her that he only did it to make the king laugh and pass his time merrily, and that he was not so ill-advised as to fail to warn the king in time that he might, as he really did, warn her before the arrival of the ambassador; so that on these excuses and the entreaties of the king she was pacified.

Now, if the king loved and honoured her living, we may believe that, she being dead, he did the same. And to manifest the mourning that he felt, the superb and honourable funeral and obsequies that he ordered for her are proof; the which I have read of in an old "History of France" that I found lying about in a closet in our house, nobody caring for it; and having gathered it up, I looked at it. Now as this is a matter that should be noted, I shall put it here, word for word as the book says, without changing anything; for though it is old, the language is not very bad; and as for the truth of the book, it has been confirmed to me by my grandmother, Mme. la Seneschale de Poitou, of the family du Lude, who was then at the Court. The book relates it thus:—

"This queen was an honourable and virtuous queen, and very wise, the true mother of the poor, the support of gentlemen, the haven of ladies, damoiselles, and honest girls, and the refuge of learned men; so that all the people of France cannot surfeit themselves enough in deploring and regretting her.

"She died at the castle of Blois on the twenty-first of January, in the year 1513, after the accomplishment of a thing she had most desired, namely: the union of the king, her lord, with the pope and the Roman Church, abhorring as she did schism and divisions. For that reason she had never ceased urging the king to this step, for which she was as

much loved and greatly revered by the Catholic princes and prelates as the king had been hated.

"I have seen at Saint-Denis a grand church cope, all covered with pearls embroidered, which she had ordered to be made expressly to send as a present to the pope, but death prevented. After her decease her body remained for three days in her room, the face uncovered, and nowise changed by hideous death, but as beautiful and agreeable as when living.

"Friday, the twenty-seventh of the month of January, her body was taken from the castle, very honourably accompanied by all the priests and monks of the town, borne by persons wearing mourning, with hoods over their heads, accompanied by twenty-four torches larger than the other torches borne by twenty-four officers of the household of the said lady, on each of which were two rich armorial escutcheons bearing the arms emblazoned of the said lady. After these torches came the reverend seigneurs and prelates, bishops, abbés, and M. le Cardinal de Luxembourg to read the office; and thus was removed the body of the said lady from the Château de Blois. . . .

"Septuagesima Sunday, twelfth of February, they arrived at the church of Notre-Dame des Champs in the suburbs of Paris, and there the body was guarded two nights with great quantities of lights; and on the following Tuesday, the devout services having been read, there marched before the body processions with the crosses of all the churches and all the monasteries of Paris, the whole University in a body, the presidents and counsellors of the sovereign court of Parliament, and generally of all other courts and jurisdictions, officers and advocates, merchants and citizens, and other lesser officers of the town. All these accompanied the said body reverentially, with the very noble seigneurs and ladies aforenamed, just as they started from Blois, all keeping fine

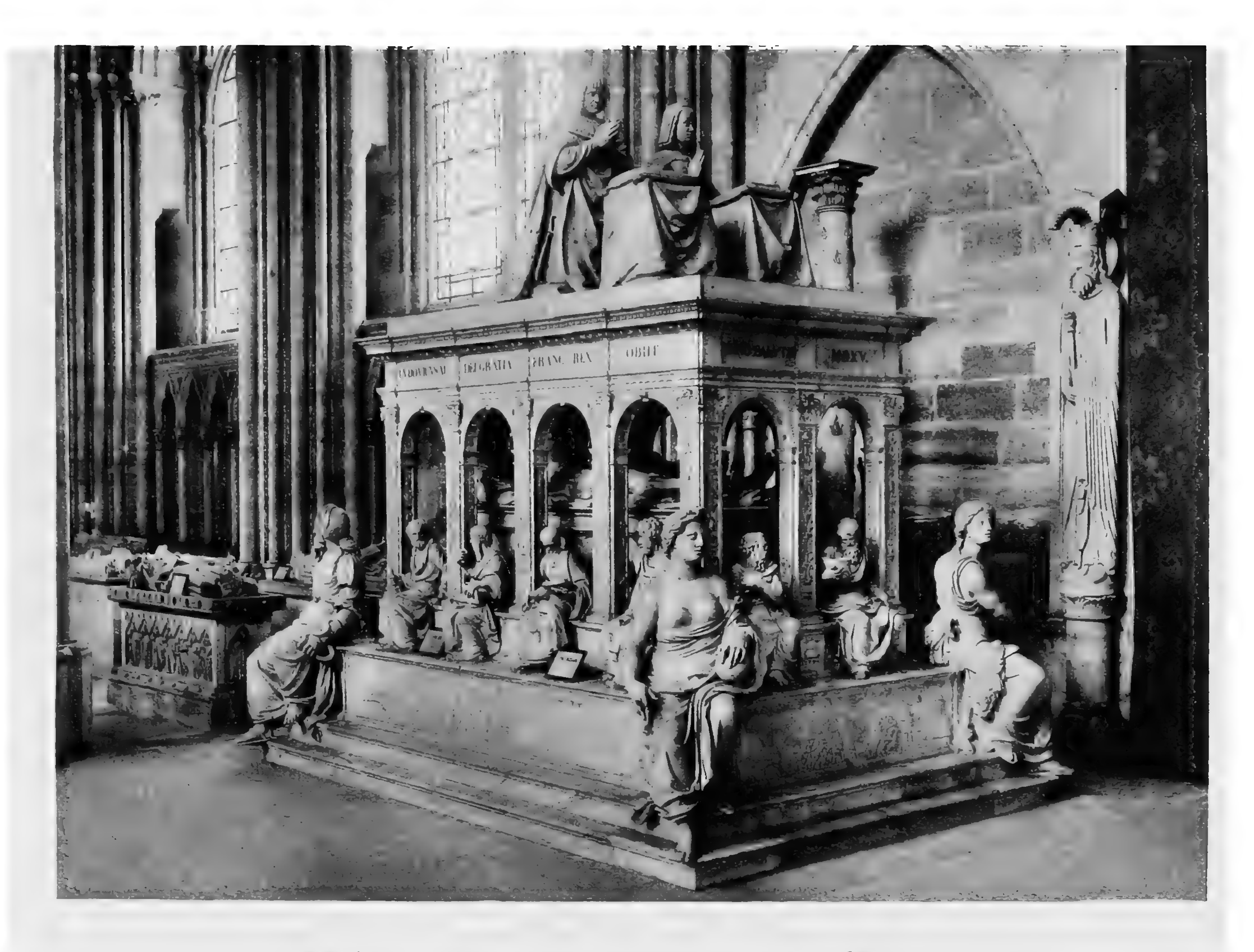
order among themselves according to their several ranks. . . . And thus was borne through Paris, in the order and manner above, the body of the queen to be sepulchred in the pious church of Saint-Denis of France; preceded by these processions to a cross which is not far beyond the place where the fair of Landit is held.

"And to the spot where stands the cross the reverend father in God, the abbé, and the venerable monks, with the priests of the churches and parishes of Saint-Denis, vestured in their great copes, with their crosses, came in procession, together with the peasants and the inhabitants of the said town, to receive the body of the late queen, which was then borne to the door of the church of Saint-Denis, still accompanied honourably by all the above-named very noble princes and princesses, seigneurs, dames, and damoiselles, and their train as already stated. . . .

"And all being duly accomplished, the body of the said lady, Madame Anne, in her lifetime very noble Queen of France, Duchesse of Bretagne, and Comtesse d'Étampes, was honourably interred and sepulchred in the tomb for her prepared.

"After this, the herald-at-arms for Bretagne summoned all the princes and officers of the said lady, to wit: the chevalier of honour, the grand-master of the household, and others, each and all, to fulfil their duty towards the said body, which they did most piteously, shedding tears from their eyes. And, this done, the aforenamed king-at-arms cried three times aloud in a most piteous voice: 'The very Christian Queen of France, Duchesse de Bretagne, our Sovereign Lady, is dead!' And then all departed. The body remained entombed.

"During her life and after her death she was honoured by the titles I have before given: true mother of the poor; the comfort of noble gentlemen; the haven of ladies and damoi-



Tomb of Louis XII and Anne de Bretagne

selles and honest girls; the refuge of learned men and those of good lives; so that speaking of her dead is only renewing the grief and regrets of all such persons, and also that of her domestic servants, whom she loved singularly. She was very religious and devout. It was she who made the foundation of the 'Bons-Hommes' [monastery of the order of Saint-François de Paule at Chaillot], otherwise called the Minimes; and she began to build the church of the said 'Bons-Hommes' near Paris, and afterwards that in Rome which is so beautiful and noble, and where, as I saw myself, they receive no monks but Frenchmen."

There, word for word, are the splendid obsequies of this queen, without changing a word of the original, for fear of doing worse, — for I could not do better. They were just like those of our kings that I have heard and read of, and those of King Charles IX., at which I was present, and which the queen, his mother, desired to make so fine and magnificent, though the finances of France were then too short to spend much, because of the departure of the King of Poland, who with his suite had squandered and carried off a great deal [1574].

Certainly I find these two interments much alike, save for three things: one, that the burial of Queen Anne was the most superb; second, that all went so well in order and so discreetly that there was no contention of ranks, as occurred at the burial of King Charles; for his body, being about to start for Notre-Dame, the court of parliament had some pique of precedence with the nobility and the Church, claiming to stand in the place of the king and to represent him when absent, he being then out of the kingdom. [Henri III. was then King of Poland]. On which a great princess, as the world goes, who was very near to him, whom I know but will not name, went about arguing and saying: "It was

no wonder if, during the lifetime of the king, seditions and troubles had been in vogue, seeing that, dead as he was, he was still able to stir up strife." Alas! he never did it, poor prince! either dead or living. We know well who were the authors of the seditions and of our civil wars. That princess who said those words has since found reason to regret them.

The third thing is that the body of King Charles was quitted, at the church of Saint-Lazare, by the whole procession, princes, seigneurs, courts of parliament, the Church, and the citizens, and was followed and accompanied from there by none but poor M. de Strozzi, de Fumel, and myself, with two gentlemen of the bedchamber, for we were not willing to abandon our master as long as he was above ground. There were also a few archers of the guard, quite pitiable to see, in the fields. So at eight in the evening in the month of July, we started with the body and its effigy thus badly accompanied.

Reaching the cross, we found all the monks of Saint-Denis awaiting us, and the body of the king was honourably escorted, with the ceremonies of the Church, to Saint-Denis, where the great Cardinal de Lorraine received it most honourably and devoutly, as he knew well how to do.

The queen-mother was very angry that the procession did not continue to the end as she intended — save for Monsieur her son, and the King of Navarre, whom she held a prisoner. The next day, however, the latter arrived in a coach, with a very good guard, and captains of the guard with him, to be present at the solemn high service, attended by the whole procession and company as at first, — a sight very sad to see.

After dinner the court of parliament sent to tell and to command the grand almoner Amyot to go and say grace

after meat for them as if for the king. To which he made answer that he should do nothing of the kind, for it was not before them he was bound to do it. They sent him two consecutive and threatening commands; which he still refused, and went and hid himself that he might answer no more. Then they swore they would not leave the table till he came; but not being able to find him, they were constrained to say grace themselves and to rise, which they did with great threats, foully abusing the said almoner, even to calling him scoundrel, and son of a butcher. I saw the whole affair; and I know what Monsieur commanded me to go and tell to M. le cardinal, asking him to pacify the matter, because they had sent commands to Monsieur to send to them, as representatives of the king, the grand almoner if he could be found. M. le cardinal went to speak to them, but he gained nothing; they standing firm on their opinion of their royal majesty and authority. I know what M. le cardinal said to me about them, telling me not to say it, — that they were perfect fools. The chief president, de Thou, was then at their head; a great senator certainly, but he had a temper. So here was another disturbance to make that princess say again that King Charles, either living or dead, on earth or under it, that body of his stirred up the world and threw it into sedition. Alas! that he could not do.

I have told this little incident, possibly more at length than I should, and I may be blamed; but I reply that I have told and put it here as it came into my fancy and memory; also that it comes in *à propos;* and that I cannot forget it, for it seems to me a thing that is rather remarkable.

Now, to return to our Queen Anne: we see from this fine last duty of her obsequies how beloved she was of earth and heaven; far otherwise than that proud, pompous queen, Isabella of Bavaria, wife of the late King Charles VI., who

having died in Paris, her body was so despised it was put out of her palace into a little boat on the river Seine, without form of ceremony or pomp, being carried through a little postern so narrow it could hardly go through, and thus was taken to Saint-Denis to her tomb like a simple damoiselle, neither more nor less. There was also a difference between her actions and those of Queen Anne: for she brought the English into France and Paris, threw the kingdom into flames and divisions, and impoverished and ruined every one; whereas Queen Anne kept France in peace, enlarged and enriched it with her beautiful duchy and the fine property she brought with her. So one need not wonder that the king regretted her and felt such mourning that he came nigh dying in the forest of Vincennes, and clothed himself and all his Court so long in black; and those who came otherwise clothed he had them driven away; neither would he see any ambassador, no matter who he was, unless he were dressed in black. And, moreover, that old History which I have quoted, says: "When he gave his daughter to M. d'Angoulême, afterwards King François, mourning was not left off by him or his Court; and the day of the espousals in the church of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the bridegroom and bride were vestured and clothed" — so this History says — "in black cloth, honestly cut in mourning shape, for the death of the said queen, Madame Anne de Bretagne, mother of the bride, in presence of the king, her father, accompanied by the princes of the blood and noble seigneurs and prelates, princesses, dames, and damoiselles, all clothed in black cloth made in mourning shape." That is what the book says. It was a strange austerity of mourning which should be noted, that not even on the day of the wedding was it dispensed with, to be renewed on the following day.

From this we may know how beloved, and worthy to be

beloved this princess was by the king, her husband, who sometimes in his merry moods and gayety would call her "his Breton."

If she had lived longer she would never have consented to that marriage of her daughter; it was very repugnant to her and she said so to the king, her husband, for she mortally hated Madame d'Angoulême, afterwards Regent, their tempers being quite unlike and not agreeing together; besides which, she had wished to unite her said daughter to Charles of Austria, then young, the greatest seigneur of Christendom, who was afterwards emperor. And this she wished in spite of M. d'Angoulême coming very near the Crown; but she never thought of that, or would not think of it, trusting to have more children herself, she being only thirty-seven years old when she died. In her lifetime and reign, reigned also that great and wise queen, Isabella of Castile, very accordant in manners and morals with our Queen Anne. For which reason they loved each other much and visited one another often by embassies, letters, and presents; 't is thus that virtue ever seeks out virtue.

King Louis was afterwards pleased to marry for the third time Marie, sister of the King of England, a very beautiful princess, young, and too young for him, so that evil came of it. But he married more from policy, to make peace with the English and to put his own kingdom at rest, than for any other reason, never being able to forget his Queen Anne. He commanded at his death that they should both be covered by the same tomb, just as we now see it in Saint-Denis, all in white marble, as beautiful and superb as never was.

Now, here I pause in my discourse and go no farther; referring the rest to books that are written of this queen better than I could write; only to content my own self have I made this discourse.

I will say one other little thing; that she was the first of our queens or princesses to form the usage of putting a belt round their arms and escutcheons, which until then were borne not inclosed, but quite loose; and the said queen was the first to put the belt.

I say no more, not having been of her time; although I protest having told only truth, having learned it, as I have said, from a book, and also from Mme. la Seneschale, my grandmother, and from Mme. de Dampierre, my aunt, a true Court register, and as clever, wise, and virtuous a lady as ever entered a Court these hundred years, and who knew well how to discourse on old things. From eight years of age she was brought up at Court, and forgot nothing; it was good to hear her talk; and I have seen our kings and queens take a singular pleasure in listening to her, for she knew all,—her own time and past times; so that people took word from her as from an oracle. King Henri III. made her lady of honour to the queen, his wife. I have here used recollections and lessons that I obtained from her, and I hope to use many more in the course of these books.

I have read the epitaph of the said queen, thus made:—

> "Here lies Anne, who was wife to two great kings,
> Great a hundred-fold herself, as queen two times!
> Never queen like her enriched all France;
> That is what it is to make a grand alliance."

Gui Patin, satirist and jovial spirit of his time [he was born in 1601], attracted to Saint-Denis because a fair was held there, visits the abbey, the treasury, "where" he says, "there was plenty of silly stuff and rubbish," and lastly the tombs of the kings, "where I could not keep myself from weeping to see so many monuments to the vanity of human

life; tears escaped me also before the tomb of the great and good king, François I., who founded our College of Professors of the King. I must own my weakness; I kissed it, and also that of his father-in-law, Louis XII., who was the Father of his People, and the best king we have ever had in France." Happy age! still neighbour to beliefs, when those reputed the greatest satirists had these touching naïvetés, these wholly patriotic and antique sensibilities.

Mézeray [born ten years later], in his natural, sincere and expressive diction, his clear and full narration, into which he has the art to bring speaking circumstances which animate the tale, says in relation to Louis XII. [in his "History of France"]: "When he rode through the country the good folk ran from all parts and for many days to see him, strewing the roads with flowers and foliage, and striving, as though he were a visible God, to touch his saddle with their handkerchiefs and keep them as precious relics."

And two centuries later, Comte Rœderer, in his Memoir on Polite Society and the Hotel de Rambouillet, printed in 1835, tells us how in his youth his mind was already busy with Louis XII., and, returning to the same interest in after years, he made him his hero of predilection and his king. In studying the history of France he thought he discovered, he says, that at the close of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth what has since been called the "French Revolution" was already consummated; that liberty rested on a free Constitution; and that Louis XII., the Father of his People, was he who had accomplished it. *Bonhomie* and goodness have never been denied to Louis XII., but Rœderer claims more, he claims ability and skill. The Italian wars, considered generally to have been mistakes, he excuses and justifies by showing them in the king's mind as a means of useful national policy; he needed to obtain from

Pope Alexander VI. the dissolution of his marriage with Jeanne de France, in order that he might marry Anne de Bretagne and so unite the duchy with the kingdom. Rœderer makes King Louis a type of perfection; seeming to have searched in regions far from those that are historically brilliant, far from spheres of fame and glory, into "the depths obscure," as he says himself, "of *useful* government for a hero of a new species."

More than that: he thinks he sees in the cherished wife of Louis XII., in Anne de Bretagne, the foundress of a school of polite manners and perfection for her sex. "She was," Brantôme had said, "the most worthy and honourable queen that had ever been since Queen Blanche, mother of the King Saint-Louis. . . . Her Court was a noble school for ladies; she had them taught and brought up wisely; and all, taking pattern by her, made themselves wise and virtuous." Rœderer takes these words of Brantôme and, giving them their strict meaning, draws therefrom a series of consequences: just as François I. had, in many respects, overthrown the political state of things established by Louis XII., so, he believes, had the women beloved of François overturned that honourable condition of society established by Anne de Bretagne. Starting from that epoch he sees, as it were, a constant struggle between two sorts of rival and incompatible societies: between the decent and ingenuous society of which Anne de Bretagne had given the idea, and the licentious society of which the mistresses of the king, women like the Duchesse d'Étampes and Diane de Poitiers, procured the triumph. These two societies, to his mind, never ceased to co-exist during the sixteenth century; on the one hand was an emulation of virtue and merit on the part of the noble heiresses, alas, too eclipsed, of Anne de Bretagne, on the other an emulation with high bidding of

gallantry, by the giddy pupils of the school of François I. To Rœderer the Hôtel de Rambouillet, that perfected salon, founded towards the beginning of the seventeenth century, is only a tardy return to the traditions of Anne de Bretagne, the triumph of merit, virtue, and polite manners over the license to which all the kings, from François I., including Henri IV., had paid tribute.

Reaching thus the Hôtel de Rambouillet and holding henceforth an unbroken thread in hand, Rœderer divides and subdivides at pleasure. He marks the divers periods and the divers shades of transition, the growth and the decline that he discerns. The first years of Louis XIV.'s youth cause him some distress; a return is being made to the ways of François I., to the brilliant mistresses. Rœderer, not concerning himself with the displeasure he will cause the classicists, lays a little of the blame for this return on the four great poets, Molière, La Fontaine, Racine, and Boileau himself, all accomplices, more or less, in the laudation of victor and lover. However, age comes on; Louis XIV. grows temperate in turn, and a woman, issuing from the very purest centre of Mme. de Rambouillet's society, and who was morally its heiress, a woman accomplished in tone, in cultivation of mind, in precision of language, and in the sentiment of propriety, — Mme. de Maintenon, — knows so well how to seize the opportunity that she seats upon the throne, in a modest half-light, all the styles of mind and merit which made the perfection of French society in its better days. The triumph of Mme. de Maintenon is that of polite society itself; Anne de Bretagne has found her pendant at the other extremity of the chain after the lapse of two centuries.

SAINTE-BEUVE, *Causeries du Lundi*, Vol. VIII.

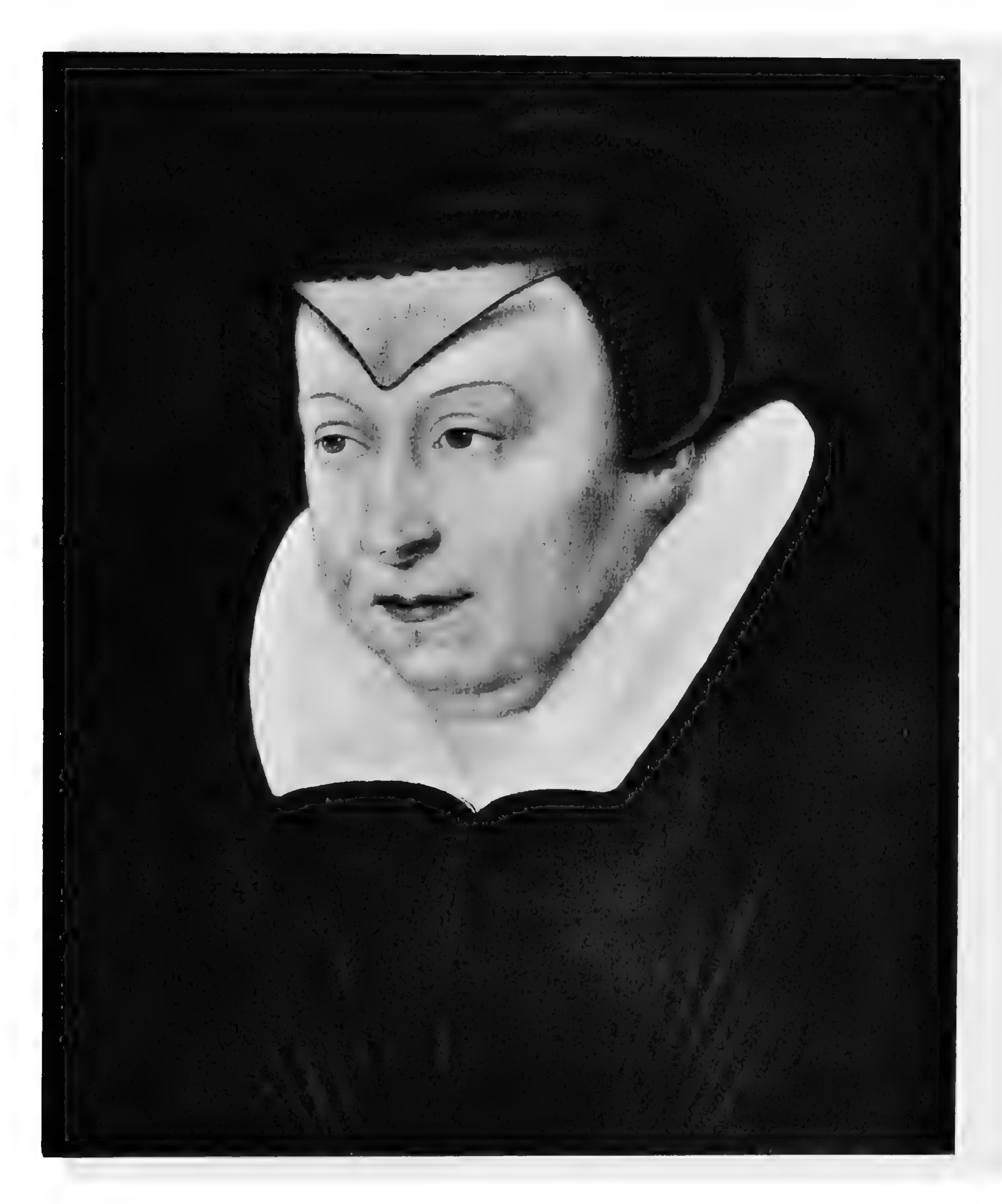
DISCOURSE II.

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI, QUEEN, AND MOTHER OF OUR LAST KINGS.

I HAVE wondered and been astonished a hundred times that, so many good writers as we have had in our day in France, none of them has been inquisitive enough to make some fine selection of the life and deeds of the queen-mother, Catherine de' Medici, inasmuch as she has furnished ample matter, and cut out much fine work, if ever a queen did — as said the Emperor Charles to Paolo Giovio [Italian historian] when, on his return from his triumphant voyage in the "Goulette" intending to make war upon King François, he gave him a provision of ink and paper, saying he would cut him out plenty of work. So it is true that this queen cut out so much that a good and zealous writer might make an Iliad of it; but they have all been lazy, — or ungrateful, for she was never niggardly to learned men; I could name several who have derived good benefits from this queen, from which, in consequence, I accuse them of ingratitude.

There is one, however, who did concern himself to write of her, and made a little book which he entitled "The Life of Catherine;"[1] but it is an imposture and not worthy of belief, as she herself said when she saw it; such falsities being apparent to every one, and easy to note and reject. He that wrote it wished her mortal harm, and was an enemy to her name, her condition, her life, her honour, and nature; and that is why he should be rejected. As for me, I would

[1] See Appendix.



Catherine de' Medici

I knew how to speak well, or that I had a good pen, well mended, at my command, that I might exalt and praise her as she deserves. At any rate, such as my pen is, I shall now employ it at all hazards.

This queen is extracted, on the father's side, from the race of the Medici, one of the noblest and most illustrious families, not only in Italy, but in Christendom. Whatever may be said, she was a foreigner to these shores because the alliances of kings cannot commonly be chosen in their kingdom; for it is not best to do so; foreign marriages being as useful and more so than near ones. The House of the Medici has always been allied and confederated with the crown of France, which still bears the *fleur-de-lys* that King Louis XI. gave that house in sign of alliance and perpetual confederation [the *fleur de Louis,* which then became the Florentine lily].

On the mother's side she issued originally from one of the noblest families of France; and so was truly French in race, heart, and affection through that great house of Boulogne and county of Auvergne; thus it is hard to tell or judge in which of her two families there was most grandeur and memorable deeds. Here is what was said of them by the Archbishop of Bourges, of the house of Beaune, as great a learned man and worthy prelate as there is in Christendom (though some say a trifle unsteady in belief, and little good in the scales of M. Saint-Michel, who weighs good Christians for the day of judgment, or so they say): it is given in the funeral oration which the archbishop made upon the said queen at Blois: —

"In the days when Brennus, that great captain of the Gauls, led his army throughout all Italy and Greece, there were with him in his troop two French nobles, one named Felsinus, the other named Bono, who, seeing the wicked

design of Brennus, after his fine conquests, to invade the temple of Delphos and soil himself and his army with the sacrilege of that temple, withdrew, both of them, and passed into Asia with their vessels and men, advancing so far that they entered the sea of the Medes, which is near to Lydia and Persia. Thence, having made great conquests and obtained great victories, they were returning through Italy, hoping to reach France, when Felsinus stopped at a place where Florence now stands beside the river Arno, which he saw to be fine and delectable, and situated much as another which had pleased him much in the country of the Medes. There he built a city which to-day is Florence; and his companion, Bono, built another and named it Bononia, now called Bologna, the which are neighbouring cities. Henceforth, in consequence of the victories and conquests of Felsinus among the Medes, he was called *Medicus* among his friends, a name that remained to the family; just as we read of Paulus surnamed *Macedonicus* for having conquered Macedonia from Perseus, and Scipio called *Africanus* for doing the same in Africa."

I do not know where M. de Beaune may have taken this history; but it is very probable that before the king and such an assembly, there convened for the funeral of the queen, he would not have alleged the fact without good authority. This descent is very far from the modern story invented and attributed without grounds to the family of Medici, according to that lying book which I have mentioned on the life of the said queen. After this the said Sieur de Beaune says further, he has read in the chronicles that one named Everard de' Medici, Sieur of Florence, went, with many of his subjects, to the assistance of the voyage and expedition made by Charlemagne against Desiderius, King of the Lombards; and having very bravely succoured

and assisted him, was confirmed and invested with the lordship of Florence. Many years after, one Anemond de' Medici, also Sieur of Florence, went, accompanied by many of his subjects, to the Holy Land, with Godefroy de Bouillon, where he died at the siege of Nicæa in Asia. Such greatness always continued in that family until Florence was reduced to a republic by the intestine wars in Italy between the emperors and the peoples, the illustrious members of it manifesting their valour and grandeur from time to time; as we saw in the latter days Cosmo de' Medici, who, with his arms, his navy, and vessels, terrified the Turks in the Mediterranean Sea and in the distant East; so that none since his time, however great he may be, has surpassed him in strength and valour and wealth, as Raffaelle Volaterano has written.

The temples and sacred shrines by him built, the hospitals by him founded, even in Jerusalem, are ample proof of his piety and magnanimity.

There were also Lorenzo de' Medici, surnamed the Great for his virtuous deeds, and two great popes, Leo and Clement, also many cardinals and grand personages of the name; besides the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosmo de' Medici, a wise and wary man, if ever there was one. He succeeded in maintaining himself in his duchy, which he found invaded and much disturbed when he came to it.

In short, nothing can rob this house of the Medici of its lustre, very noble and grand as it is in every way.

As for the house of Boulogne and Auvergne, who will say that it is not great, having issued originally from that noble Eustache de Boulogne, whose brother, Godefroy de Bouillon, bore arms and escutcheons with so vast a number of princes, seigneurs, chevaliers, and Christian soldiers, even to Jerusalem and the Sepulchre of our Saviour; and would have made himself, by his sword and the favour of God, king, not

only of Jerusalem but of the greater part of the East, to the confusion of Mahomet, the Saracens, and the Mahometans, amazing all the rest of the world and replanting Christianity in Asia, where it had fallen to the lowest ?

For the rest, this house has ever been sought in alliance by all the monarchies of Christendom and the great families; such as France, England, Scotland, Hungary, and Portugal, which latter kingdom belonged to it of right, as I have heard Président de Thou say, and as the queen herself did me the honour to tell me at Bordeaux when she heard of the death of King Sebastian [in Morocco, 1578], the Medici being received to argue the justice of their rights at the last Assembly of States before the decease of King Henry [in 1580]. This was why she armed M. de Strozzi to make an invasion, the King of Spain having usurped the kingdom; she was arrested in so fine a course only by reasons which I will explain at another time.

I leave you to suppose, therefore, whether this house of Boulogne was great; yes, so great that I once heard Pope Pius IV. say, sitting at table at a dinner he gave after his election to the Cardinals of Ferrara and Guise, his creations, that the house of Boulogne was so great and noble he knew none in France, whatever it was, that could surpass it in antiquity, valour, and grandeur.

All this is much against those malicious detractors who have said that this queen was a Florentine of low birth. Moreover, she was not so poor but what she brought to France in marriage estates which are worth to-day twenty-six thousand *livres*, — such as the counties of Auvergne and Lauragais, the seigneuries of Leverons, Donzenac, Boussac, Gorrèges, Hondecourt and other lands, — all an inheritance from her mother. Besides which, her dowry was of more than two hundred thousand ducats, which are worth to-day over four

hundred thousand; with great quantities of furniture, precious stones, jewels, and other riches, such as the finest and largest pearls ever seen in so great a number, which she afterwards gave to her daughter-in-law, the Queen of Scotland [Mary Stuart], whom I have seen wearing them.

Besides all this, many estates, houses, deeds, and claims in Italy.

But more than all else, through her marriage the affairs of France, which had been so shaken by the imprisonment of the king and his losses at Milan and Naples, began to get firmer. King François was very willing to say that the marriage had served his interests. Therefore there was given to this queen for her device a rainbow, which she bore as long as she was married, with these words in Greek *φῶς φέρει ἠδὲ γαλήνην.* Which is the same as saying that just as this fire and bow in the sky brings and signifies good weather after rain, so this queen was a true sign of clearness, serenity, and the tranquillity of peace. The Greek is thus translated: *Lucem fert et serenitatem* — "She brings light and serenity."

After that, the emperor [Charles V.] dared push no longer his ambitious motto: "Ever farther." For, although there was truce between himself and King François, he was nursing his ambition with the design of gaining always from France whatever he could; and he was much astonished at this alliance with the pope [Clement VII.], regarding the latter as able, courageous, and vindictive for his imprisonment by the imperial forces at the sack of Rome [1527]. Such a marriage displeased him so much that I have heard a truthful lady of the Court say that if he had not been married to the empress, he would have seized an alliance with the pope himself and espoused his niece [Catherine de' Medici], as much for the support of so strong a party as because he feared the pope would assist in making him lose Naples, Milan, and

Genoa; for the pope had promised King François, in an authentic document, when he delivered to him the money of his niece's dowry and her rings and jewels, to make the dowry worthy of such a marriage by the addition of three pearls of inestimable value, of the excessive splendour of which all the greatest kings were envious and covetous; the which were Naples, Milan, and Genoa. And it is not to be doubted that if the said pope had lived out his natural life he would have sold the emperor well, and made him pay dear for that imprisonment, in order to aggrandize his niece and the kingdom to which she was joined. But Clement VII. died young, and all this profit came to nought.

So now our queen, having lost her mother, Magdelaine de Boulogne, and Lorenzo de' Medici, Duke of Urbino, her father, in early life, was married by her good uncle the pope to France, whither she was brought by sea to Marseille in great triumph; and her wedding was pompously performed, at the age of fourteen. She made herself so beloved by the king, her father-in-law, and by King Henri, her husband [not king till the death of François I.], that on remaining ten years without producing issue, and many persons endeavouring to persuade the king and the dauphin, her husband, to repudiate her because there was such need of an heir to France, neither the one nor the other would consent because they loved her so much. But after ten years, in accordance with the natural habit of the women of the race of Medici, who are tardy in conceiving, she began by producing the little King François II. After that, was born the Queen of Spain, and then, consecutively, that fine and illustrious progeny whom we have all seen, and also others no sooner born than dead, by great misfortune and fatality. All this caused the king, her husband, to love her more and more, and in such a way that he, who was of an amorous tempera-

ment, and greatly liked to make love and to change his loves, said often that of all the women in the world there was none like his wife for that, and he did not know her equal. He had reason to say so, for she was truly a beautiful and most amiable princess.

She was of rich and very fine presence; of great majesty, but very gentle when need was; of noble appearance and good grace, her face handsome and agreeable, her bosom very beautiful, white and full; her body also very white, the flesh beautiful, the skin smooth, as I have heard from several of her ladies; of a fine plumpness also, the leg and thigh very beautiful (as I have heard, too, from the same ladies); and she took great pleasure in being well shod and in having her stockings well and tightly drawn up.

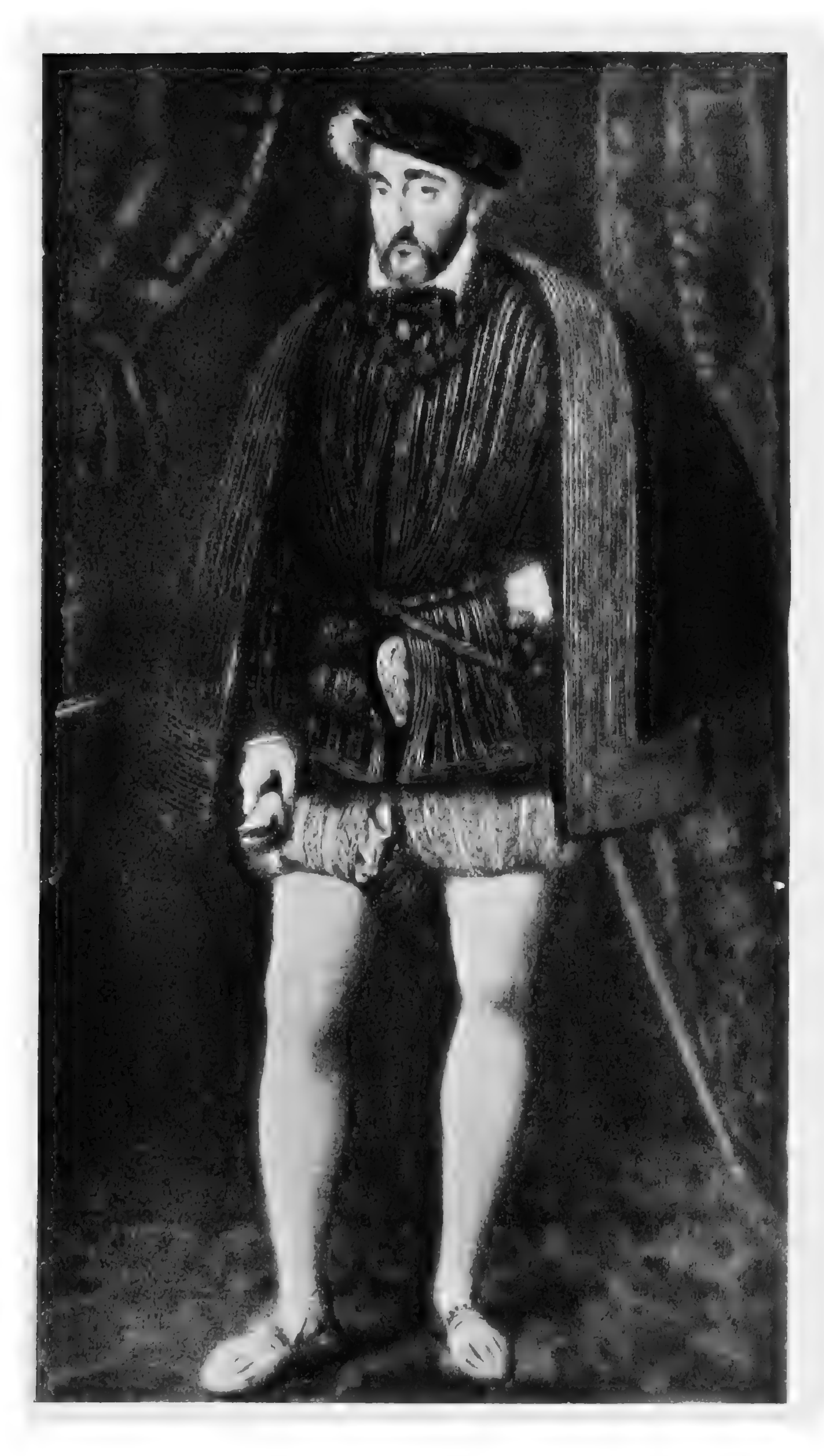
Besides all this, the most beautiful hand that was ever seen, as I believe. Once upon a time the poets praised Aurora for her fine hands and beautiful fingers; but I think our queen would efface her in that, and she guarded and maintained that beauty all her life. The king, her son, Henri III., inherited much of this beauty of the hand.

She always clothed herself well and superbly, often with some pretty and new invention. In short, she had many charms in herself to make her beloved. I remember that one day at Lyons she went to see a painter named Corneille, who had painted in a large room all the great seigneurs, princes, cavaliers, queens, princesses, ladies of the Court, and damoiselles. Being in the said room of these portraits we saw there our queen, painted very well in all her beauty and perfection, apparelled *à la Française* in a cap and her great pearls, and a gown with wide sleeves of silver tissue furred with lynx, — the whole so well represented to the life that only speech was lacking; her three fine daughters were beside her. She took great pleasure at the sight, and all the

company there present did the same, praising and admiring her beauty above all. She herself was so ravished by the contemplation that she could not take her eyes from the picture until M. de Nemours came to her and said: "Madame, I think you are there so well portrayed that nothing more can be said; and it seems to me that your daughters do you proper honour, for they do not go before you or surpass you." To this she answered: "My cousin, I think you can remember the time, the age, and the dress of this picture; so that you can judge better than any of this company, for you saw me like that, whether I was estimated such as you say, and whether I ever was as I there appear." There was not one in the company that did not praise and estimate that beauty highly, and say that the mother was worthy of the daughters, and the daughters of the mother. And such beauty lasted her, married and widowed, almost to her death; not that she was as fresh as in her more blooming years, but always well preserved, very desirable and agreeable.

For the rest, she was very good company and of gay humour; loving all honourable exercises, such as dancing, in which she had great grace and majesty.

She also loved hunting; about which I heard a lady of the Court tell this tale: King François, having chosen and made a company which was called "the little band of the Court ladies," the handsomest, daintiest, and most favoured, often escaped from the Court and went to other houses to hunt the stag and pass his time, sometimes staying thus withdrawn eight days, ten days, sometimes more and sometimes less, as the humour took him. Our queen (who was then only Mme. la dauphine) seeing such parties made without her, and that even Mesdames her sisters-in-law were there while she stayed at home, made prayer to the king, to take her always with him, and to do her the honour to permit that she should never budge without him.



Henri II

It was said that she, being very shrewd and clever, did this as much or more to see the king's actions and get his secrets and hear and know all things, as from liking for the hunt.

King François was pleased with this request, for it showed the good-will that she had for his company; and he granted it heartily; so that besides loving her naturally he now loved her more, and delighted in giving her pleasure in the hunt, at which she never left his side, but followed him at full speed. She was very good on horseback and bold; sitting with ease, and being the first to put the leg around a pommel; which was far more graceful and becoming than sitting with the feet upon a plank. Till she was sixty years of age and over she liked to ride on horseback, and after her weakness prevented her she pined for it. It was one of her greatest pleasures to ride far and fast, though she fell many times with damage to her body, breaking her leg once, and wounding her head, which had to be trepanned. After she was widowed and had charge of the king and the kingdom, she took the king always with her, and her other children; but while her husband, King Henri, lived, she usually went with him to the meet of the stag and the other hunts.

If he played at pall-mall she watched him play, and played herself. She was very fond of shooting with a cross-bow *à jalet* [ball of stone], and she shot right well; so that always when she went to ride her cross-bow was taken with her, and if she saw any game, she shot it.

She was ever inventing some new dance or beautiful ballet when the weather was bad. Also she invented games and passed her time with one and another intimately; but always appearing very grave and austere when necessary.

She was fond of seeing comedies and tragedies; but after

"Sophonisbe," a tragedy composed by M. de Saint-Gélais, was very well represented by her daughters and other ladies and damoiselles and gentlemen of her Court, at Blois for the marriages of M. du Cypière and the Marquis d'Elbœuf, she took an opinion that it was harmful to the affairs of the kingdom, and would never have tragedies played again. But she listened readily to comedies and tragi-comedies, and even those of "Zani" and "Pantaloon," taking great pleasure in them, and laughing with all her heart like any other; for she liked laughter, and her natural self was jovial, loving a witty word and ready with it, knowing well when to cast her speech and her stone, and when to withhold them.

She passed her time in the afternoons at work on her silk embroideries, in which she was as perfect as possible. In short, this queen liked and gave herself up to all honourable exercises; and there was not one that was worthy of herself and her sex that she did not wish to know and practise.

There is what I can say, speaking briefly and avoiding prolixity, about the beauty of her body and her occupations.

When she called any one "my friend" it was either that she thought him a fool, or she was angry with him. This was so well known that she had a serving gentleman named M. de Bois-Fevrier, who made reply when she called him "my friend": "Ha! madame, I would rather you called me your enemy; for to call me your friend is as good as saying I am a fool, or that you are in anger against me; for I know your nature this long time."

As for her mind, it was very great and very admirable, as was shown in so many fine and signal acts by which her life has been made illustrious forever. The king, her husband, and his council esteemed her so much that when the king went his journey to Germany, out of his kingdom, he established and ordered her as regent and governor throughout

his dominions during his absence, by a declaration solemnly made before a full parliament in Paris. And in this office she behaved so wisely that there was no disturbance, change, or alteration in the State by reason of the king's absence; but, on the contrary, she looked so carefully to business that she assisted the king with money, means, and men, and other kinds of succour; which helped him much for his return, and even for the conquest which he made of cities in the duchy of Luxembourg, such as Yvoy, Montmedy, Dampvilliers, Chimay, and others.

I leave you to think how he who wrote that fine life I spoke of detracted from her in saying that never did the king, her husband, allow her to put her nose into matters of State. Was not making her regent in his absence giving her ample occasion to have full knowledge of them? And it was thus she did during all the journeys that he made yearly in going to his armies.

What did she after the battle of Saint-Laurens, when the State was shaken and the king had gone to Compiègne to raise a new army? She so espoused affairs that she roused and excited the gentlemen of Paris to give prompt succour to their king, which came most apropos, both in money and in other things very necessary in war.

Also, when the king was wounded, those who were of that time and saw it cannot be ignorant of the great care she took for his cure: the watches she made beside him without ever sleeping; the prayers with which, time after time, she importuned God; the processions and visitation of churches which she made; and the posts which she sent about everywhere inquiring for doctors and surgeons. But his hour had come; and when he passed from this world into the other, she made such lamentations and shed such tears that never did she stanch them; and in memory of him, whenever he was

spoken of as long as she lived, they gushed from the depths of her eyes; so that she took a device proper and suitable to her tears and her mourning, namely: a mound of quicklime, on which the drops of heaven fell abundantly, with these words writ in Latin: *Adorem extincta testantur vivere flamma;* the drops of water, like her tears, showing ardour, though the flame was extinct. This device takes its allegory from the nature of quicklime, which, being watered, burns strangely and shows its fire though flame is not there. Thus did our queen show her ardour and her affection by her tears, though flame, which was her husband, was now extinct; and this was as much as to say that, dead as he was, she made it appear by her tears that she could never forget him, but should love him always.

A like device was borne in former days by Madame Valentine de Milan, Duchesse d'Orléans, after the death of her husband, killed in Paris, for which she had such great regret that for all comfort and solace in her moaning, she took a watering-pot for her device, on the top of which was an S, in sign, so they say, of *seule, souvenir, soucis, soupirer,* and around the said watering-pot were written these words: *Rien ne m'est plus; plus ne m'est rien* — "Nought is more to me; more is to me nothing." This device can still be seen in her chapel in the church of the Franciscans at Blois.

The good King René of Sicily, having lost his wife Isabel, Duchesse de Lorraine, suffered such great grief that never did he truly rejoice again; and when his intimate friends and favourites urged him to consolation he led them to his cabinet and showed them, painted by his own hand (for he was an excellent painter), a Turkish bow with its string unstrung, beneath which was written: *Arco per lentare piaga non sana* — "The bow although unstrung heals not the wound." Then he said to them: "My friends, with this picture

I answer all your reasons: by unstringing a bow or breaking its string, the harm thus done by the arrow may quickly be mended, but, the life of my dear spouse being by death extinct and broken, the wound of the loyal love — the which, her living, filled my heart — cannot be cured." And in various places in Angers we see these Turkish bows with broken strings and beneath them the same words, *Arco per lentare piaga non sana ;* even at the Franciscan church, in the chapel of Saint-Bernardin which he caused to be decorated. This device he took after the death of his wife; for in her lifetime he bore another.

Our queen, around her device which I have told of, placed many trophies: broken mirrors and fans, crushed plumes, and pearls, jewels scattered to earth, and chains in pieces; the whole in sign of quitting worldly pomp, her husband being dead, for whom her mourning never was remitted. And, without the grace of God and the fortitude with which he had endowed her, she would surely have succumbed to such great sadness and distress. Besides, she saw that her young children and France had need of her, as we have since seen by experience; for, like a Semiramis, or second Athalie, she foiled, saved, guarded, and preserved her said young children from many enterprises planned against them in their early years; and this with so much industry and prudence that everybody thought her wonderful. She, being regent of the kingdom after the death of her son King François during the minority of our king by the ordering of the Estates of Orléans, imposed her will upon the King of Navarre, who, as premier prince of the blood, wished to be regent in her place and govern all things; but she gained so well and so dexterously the said Estates that if the said King of Navarre had not gone elsewhere she would have caused him to be attainted of the crime of *lèse-majesté.*

And possibly she would still have done so for the actions which, it was said, he made the Prince de Condé do about those Estates, but for Mme. de Montpensier, who governed her much. So the said king was forced to content himself to be under her. Now there is one of the shrewd and subtle deeds she did in her beginning.

Afterwards she knew how to maintain her rank and authority so imperiously that no one dared gainsay it, however grand and disturbing he was, for a period of three months when, the Court being at Fontainebleau, the said King of Navarre, wishing to show his feelings, took offence because M. de Guise ordered the keys of the king's house brought to him every evening, and kept them all night in his room like a grand-master (for that is one of his offices), so that no one could go out without his permission. This angered the King of Navarre, who wished to keep the keys himself; but, being refused, he grew spiteful and mutinied in such a way that one morning suddenly he came to take leave of the king and queen, intending to depart from the Court, taking with him all the princes of the blood whom he had won over, together with M. le Connétable de Montmorency and his children and nephew.

The queen, who did not in any way expect this step, was at first much astonished, and tried all she could to ward off the blow, giving good hope to the King of Navarre that if he were patient he would some day be satisfied. But fine words gained her nothing with the said king, who was set on departing. Whereupon the queen bethought her of this subtle point: she sent and gave commandment to M. le connétable, as the principal, first, and oldest officer of the crown, to stay near the king, his master, as his duty and office demanded, and not to leave him. M. le connétable, wise and judicious as he was, being very zealous for his

master and careful of his grandeur and honour, after reflecting on his duty and the command sent to him, went to see the king and present himself as ready to fulfil his office; which greatly astonished the King of Navarre, who was on the point of mounting his horse expecting M. le connétable, who came instead to represent his duty and office and to persuade him not to budge himself nor to depart; and did this so well that the King of Navarre went to see the king and queen at the instigation of the connétable, and having conferred with their Majesties, his journey was given up and his mules were countermanded, they having then arrived at Melun. So all was pacified to the great content of the King of Navarre. Not that M. de Guise diminished in any way his office, or yielded one atom of his honour, for he kept his pre-eminence and all that belonged to him, without being shaken in the least, although he was not the stronger; but he was a man of the world in such things, who was never bewildered, but knew very well how to brave all and hold his rank and keep what he had.

It is not to be doubted, as all the world knows, that, if the queen had not bethought her of this ruse regarding M. le connétable, all that party would have gone to Paris and stirred up things to our injury; for which reason great praise should be given to the queen for this shift. I know, for I was there, that many persons said it was not of her invention, but that of Cardinal de Tournon, a wise and judicious prelate; but that is false, for, old stager though he was, i' faith the queen knew more of wiles than he, or all the council of the king together; for very often, when he was at fault, she would help him and put him on the traces of what he ought to know, of which I might produce a number of examples; but it will be enough to give this instance, which is fresh, and which she herself did me the honour to disclose to me. It is as follows: —

When she went to Guyenne, and lately to Coignac, to reconcile the princes of the Religion and those of the League, and so put the kingdom in peace, for she saw it would soon be ruined by such divisions, she determined to proclaim a truce in order to treat of this peace; at which the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé were very discontent and mutinous, — all the more, they said, because this proclamation did them great harm on account of their foreigners, who, having heard of it, might repent of their coming, or delay it; and they accused the said queen of having made it with that intention. So they said and resolved not to see the queen, and not to treat with her unless the said truce were rescinded. Now finding her council, whom she had with her, though composed of good heads, very ridiculous and little to be honoured because they thought it impossible to find means to rescind the said truce, the queen said to them: "Truly, you are very stupid as to the remedy. Know you not better? There is but one means for that. You have at Maillezais the regiment of Neufvy and de Sorlu, Huguenots; send me from here, from Niort, all the arquebusiers that you can, and cut them to pieces, and there you have the truce rescinded and undone without further trouble." As she commanded so it was executed; the arquebusiers started, led by the Capitaine l'Estelle, and forced their fort and their barricades so well that there they were quite defeated, Sorlu killed, who was a valiant man, Neufvy taken prisoner with many others, and all their banners captured and brought to Niort to the queen; who, using her accustomed turn of clemency, pardoned all and sent them away with their ensigns and even with their flags, which, as regards the flags, is a very rare thing. But she chose to do this stroke, rare or not, so she told me, to the princes; who now knew they had to do with a very able princess, and that it was not to her they should address such mockery as to

make her rescind a truce by the very heralds who had proclaimed it; for while they were thinking to make her receive that insult, she had fallen upon them, and now sent them word by the prisoners that it was not for them to affront her by asking unseemly and unreasonable things, because it was in her power to do them both good and evil.

That is how this queen knew how to give and teach a lesson to her council. I might tell of many such things, but I have now to treat of other points: the first of which must be to answer those whom I have often heard say that she was the first to rouse to arms, and so was cause of our civil wars. Whoso will look to the source of the matter will not believe that; for the triumvirate having been created, she, seeing the proceedings which were preparing and the change made by the King of Navarre, — who from being formerly Huguenot and very reformed had made himself Catholic, — and knowing that through that change she had reason to fear for the king, the kingdom, and her own person that he would move against them, reflected and puzzled her mind to discover to what such proceedings, meetings, and colloquies held in secret tended. Not being able, as they say, to come at the bottom of the pot, she bethought her one day, when the secret council was in session in the room of the King of Navarre, to go into the room above his, and by means of a tube which she had caused to be slipped surreptitiously under the tapestry she listened unperceived to their discourse. Among other things she heard one thing that was very terrible and bitter to her. The Maréchal de Saint-André, one of the triumvirate, gave it as his opinion that the queen should be put in a sack and flung into the river, for that otherwise they could never succeed in their plans. But the late M. de Guise, who was very good and generous, said that must not be; for it were too unjust to make the wife and mother of our kings perish thus

miserably, and he opposed it all. For this the said queen has always loved him, and proved it to his children after his death by giving them his estates.

I leave you to suppose what this sentence was to the queen, having heard it thus with her own ears, and whether she had no occasion for fear, although she was thus defended by M. de Guise. From what I have heard tell by one of her most intimate ladies, she feared they would strike the blow without the knowledge of M. de Guise, as indeed she had reason to do; for in deeds so detestable an upright man should always be distrusted, and the act not communicated to him. She was thus compelled to consider her safety, and employ those she saw already under arms [the Prince de Condé and other Protestant leaders], begging them to have pity for a mother and her children.

That is the whole cause, just as it was, of the civil war. She would never go to Orléans with the others, nor give them the king and her children, as she could have done; and she was very glad that in the hurly-burly of arms she and the king her son and her other children were in safety, as was reasonable. Moreover, she requested and held the promise of the others that whenever she should summon them to lay down their arms they would do so; which, nevertheless, they would not do when the time came, no matter what appeals she made to them, and what pains she took, and the great heat she endured at Talsy, to induce them to listen to the peace she could have made good and secured for all France had they then listened to her; and this great fire and others we have since seen lighted from this first brand would have been forever extinguished in France if they would then have trusted her. I know what I myself have heard her say, with the tears in her eyes, and with what zeal she endeavoured to do it.

This is why they cannot charge her with the first spark of the civil war, nor yet with the second, which was the day of Meaux; for at that time she was thinking only of a hunt, and of giving pleasure to the king in her beautiful house at Monceaux. The warning came that M. le Prince and others of the Religion were in arms and advancing to surprise and seize the king under colour of presenting a request. God knows who was the cause of this new disturbance, and without the six thousand Swiss then lately raised, who knows what might have happened? This levy of Swiss was only the pretext of their taking up arms, and of saying and publishing that it was done to force them to war. In fact it was they, themselves, as I know from being at Court, who requested that levy of the king and queen, on the passage of the Duke of Alba and his army, fearing that under colour of reaching Flanders he might descend upon the frontiers of France; and they urged that it was the custom to arm the frontiers whenever a neighbouring State was arming. No one can be ignorant how urgent for this they were to the king and queen by letters and embassies,—even M. le Prince himself and M. l'amiral [Coligny] coming to see the king on this subject at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, where I saw them.

I would also like to ask (for all that I write here I saw myself) who it was who took up arms on Shrove Tuesday, and who suborned and solicited Monsieur the king's brother, and the King of Navarre, to give ear to the enterprises for which Mole and Coconas were executed in Paris. It was not the queen, for it was by her prudence that she prevented them from uprising,— by keeping Monsieur and the King of Navarre so locked in to the forest of Vincennes that they could not get out; and on the death of King Charles she held them so tightly in Paris and the Louvre, barring their windows one morning,— at any rate those of the King of

Navarre, who was lodged on the lower floor (the King of Navarre, told me this himself with tears in his eyes), — that they could not escape as they intended, which would greatly have embroiled the State and prevented the return of Poland to the King, which was what they were after. I know all this from having been invited to the *fricassée*, which was one of the finest strokes ever made by the queen. Starting from Paris she conducted them to Lyons to meet the king so dexterously that no one who saw them would ever have supposed them prisoners; they went in the same coach with her, and she presented them herself to the king, who, on his side, pardoned them soon after.

Also, who was it that enticed Monsieur the king's brother to leave Paris one fine night and the company of his brother who loved him well, and whose affection he cast off to go and take up arms and embroil all France? M. de La Noue knows well, and also the secret plots that began at the siege of Rochelle, and what I said to him about them. It was not the queen-mother, for she felt such grief at seeing one brother banded against another brother and his king, that she swore she would die of it, or else replace and reunite them as before — which she did; for I heard her say at Blois, in conversation with Monsieur, that she prayed for nothing so much as that God would grant her the favour of that reunion, after which he might send her death and she would accept it with all her heart; or else she would gladly retire to her houses of Monceaux and Chenonceaux, and never mix further in the affairs of France, wishing to end her days in tranquillity. In fact, she truly wished to do the latter; but the king implored her to abstain, for he and his kingdom had great need of her. I am assured that if she had not made this peace at that time, all was over with France, for there were in the country fifty thousand foreigners, from

one region or another, who would have aided in humbling and destroying her.

It was, therefore, not the queen who called to arms at this time to satisfy the State-Assembly at Blois, the which, wanting but one religion and proposing to abolish that which was contrary to their own, demanded, if the spiritual blade did not suffice to abolish it, that recourse should be had to the temporal. Some have said that the queen had bribed them; that is false. I do not say that she did not bribe them later, which was a fine stroke of policy and intelligence; but it was not she who called together the said Assembly; so far from that, she blamed them for all, and also because they lessened greatly the king's authority and her own. It was the party of the Religion which had long demanded that Assembly, and required by the terms of the last peace that it should be called together and assembled; to which the queen objected strongly, foreseeing abuses. However, to content them because they clamoured for it so much, they had it, to their own confusion and damage, and not to their profit and contentment as they expected, so that finally they took up arms. Thus it was still not the queen who did so.

Neither was it she who caused them to be taken up when Mont-de-Marsan, La Fère in Picardy, and Cahors were taken. I remember what the king said to M. de Miossans, who came to him on behalf of the King of Navarre; he rebuffed him harshly, and told him that while those princes were cloying him with fine words they were calling to arms and taking cities.

Now that is how this queen was the instigator of all our wars and civil fires, the which, while she never lighted them, she spent her pains and labour in striving to extinguish, abhorring to see so many of the nobles and men of honour die. And without that, and without her commiseration, they

who have hated her with mortal hatred would have been ill-off, and their party underground and not flourishing as it now is; which must be imputed to her kindness, of which we now have sore need, for, as every one says and the poor people cry, "We have no longer the queen-mother to make peace for us." It was not her fault that peace was not made when she went to Guyenne lately to treat of it with the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé.

They have tried to accuse her also of being an accomplice in the wars of the League. Why, then, should she have brought about the peace of which I speak if she were that? Why should she have pacified the riot of the barricades in Paris? Why should she have reconciled the king and the Duc de Guise only to destroy the latter and kill him?

Well, let them launch into such foul abuse against her all they will, never shall we have another queen in France so good for peace.

They have accused her of that massacre in Paris [the Saint-Bartholomew]; all that is a sealed book to me, for at that time I was preparing to embark at Brouage; but I have often heard it said that she was not the chief actress in it. There were three or four others, whom I might name, who were more ardent in it than she and pushed her on, making her believe, from the threats uttered on the wounding of M. l'amiral, that the king was to be killed, and she with all her children and the whole Court, or else that the country would be in arms much worse than ever. Certainly the party of Religion did very wrong to make the threats it is said they made; for they brought on the fate of poor M. l'amiral, and procured his death. If they had kept themselves quiet, said no word, and let M. l'amiral's wound heal, he could have left Paris at his ease, and nothing further would have come of it. M. de La Noue was of that opinion.

He and M. Strozzi and I have often spoken of it, he not approving of such bravados, audacities, and threats as were made at the very Court of the king in his city of Paris; and he greatly blamed M. de Theligny, his brother-in-law, who was one of the hottest, calling him and his companions perfect fools and most incapable. M. l'amiral never used such language as I have heard from others, at least not aloud. I do not say that in secret and private with his intimate friends he never spoke it. That was the cause of the death of M. l'amiral and the massacres of his people, and not the queen; as I have heard say by those who know well, although there are many from whose heads you could never oust the opinion that this train was long laid and the plot long in hatching. It is all false. The least passionate think as I have said; the more passionate and obstinate believe the other way; and very often we give credit for the ordering of events to kings and great princes, and say after those events have happened how prudent and provident they were, and how well they knew how to dissimulate, when all the while they knew no more about them than a plum.

To return again to our queen; her enemies have put it about that she was not a good Frenchwoman. God knows with what ardour I saw her urge that the English might be driven from France at Havre de Grâce, and what she said of it to M. le Prince, and how she made him go with many gentlemen of his party, and the crown-companies of M. d'Andelot, and other Huguenots, and how she herself led the army, mounted usually on a horse, like a second beautiful Queen Marfisa, exposing herself to the arquebusades and the cannonades as if she were one of her captains, looking to the making of the batteries, and saying she should never be at ease until she had taken that town and driven the English out of France; hating worse than poison those who had sold

it to them. And thus she did so much that finally she made the country French.

When Rouen was besieged, I saw her in the greatest anger when she beheld supplies entering the town by means of a French galley captured the year before, she fearing that the place, failing to be taken by us, would come under the dominion of the English. For this reason she pushed hard at the wheel, as they say, to take it, and never failed every day to come to the fort Sainte-Catherine to hold council and see the firing. I have often seen her passing along the covered way of Sainte-Catherine, the cannonades and arquebusades raining round her, and she caring nothing for them.

Those who were there saw her as I did; there are still many ladies, her maids of honour who accompanied her, to whom the firing was not too pleasant; I knew this for I saw them there; but when M. le connétable and M. de Guise remonstrated with her, telling her some misfortune would come of it, she only laughed and said: Why should she spare herself more than they, inasmuch as she had as good courage as they had, though not their strength, which her sex denied her? As for fatigue, she endured that well, whether on foot or on horseback. I think that for long there had never been a queen or a princess better on horseback, sitting with such grace, — not appearing, for all that, like a masculine dame, in form and style a fantastic amazon, but a comely princess, beautiful, agreeable, and gentle.

They said of her that she was very Spanish. Certainly as long as her good daughter lived [Élisabeth, wife of Philip II.] she loved Spain; but after her daughter died we knew, at least some of us, whether she had reason to love it, either country or nation. True it is that she was always so prudent that she chose to treat the King of Spain as her good son-in-law, in order that he in turn should

treat better her good and beautiful daughter, as is the custom of good mothers; so that he never came to trouble France, nor to bring war there, according to his brave heart and natural ambition.

Others have also said that she did not like the nobility of France and desired much to shed its blood. I refer for that to the many times that she made peace and spared that blood; besides which, attention should be paid to this, namely: that while she was regent, and her children minors, there were not known at Court so many quarrels and combats as we have seen there since; she would not allow them, and forbade expressly all duelling and punished those who transgressed that order. I have seen her at Court, when the king went away to stay some days and she was left absolute and alone, at a time when quarrels had begun again and were becoming common, also duelling, which she never would permit, — I have known her, I say, give a sudden order to the captain of the guards to make arrests, and to the marshals and captains to pacify the quarrel; so that, to tell the truth, she was more feared than the king; for she knew how to talk to the disobedient and the dissolute, and rebuke them terribly.

I remember that once, the king having gone to the baths of Bourbon, my late cousin La Chastaignerie had a quarrel with Pardailhan. She had him searched for, in order to forbid him, on his life, to fight a duel; but not being able to find him for two whole days, she had him tracked so well that on a Sunday morning, he being on the island of Louviers awaiting his enemy, the grand provost arrived to arrest him, and took him prisoner to the Bastille by order of the queen. But he stayed there only one night; for she sent for him and gave him a reprimand, partly sharp and partly gentle, because she was really kind, and was harsh only when

she chose to be. I know very well what she said to me also when I was for seconding my said cousin, namely: that as the older I ought to have been the wiser.

The year that the king returned to Poland a quarrel arose between Messieurs de Grillon and d'Entraigues, two brave and valiant gentlemen, who being called out and ready to fight, the king forbade them through M. de Rambouillet, one of his captains of the guard then in quarters, and he ordered M. de Nevers and the Maréchal de Retz to make up the quarrel, which they failed in doing. That evening the queen sent for them both into her room; and as their quarrel was about two great ladies of her household, she commanded them with great sternness, and then besought them both in all gentleness, to leave to her the settlement of their differences; inasmuch as, having done them the honour to meddle in it, and the princes, marshals, and captains having failed in making them agree, it was now a point of honour with her to have the glory of doing so: by which she made them friends, and they embraced without other forms, taking all from her; so that by her prudence the subject of the quarrel, which was delicate, and rather touched the honour of the two ladies, was never known publicly. That was the true kindness of a princess! And then to say she did not like the nobility! Ha! the truth was, she noticed and esteemed it too much. I think there was not a great family in the kingdom with whom she was not acquainted; she used to say she had learned from King François the genealogies of the great families of his kingdom; and as for the king, her husband, he had this faculty, that when he had once seen a nobleman he knew him always, in face, in deeds, and in reputation.

I have seen the queen, often and ordinarily, while the king, her son, was a minor, take the trouble to present to him her-

self the gentlemen of his kingdom, and put them in his memory thus: "Such a one did service to the king your grandfather, at such and such times and places; and this one served your father;" and so on, — commanding him to remember all this, and to love them and do well by them, and recognize them at other times; which he knew very well how to do, for, through such instruction, this king recognized readily all men of character and race and honour throughout his kingdom.

Detractors have also said that she did not like her people. What appears? Were there ever so many *tailles*, subsidies, imposts, and other taxes while she was governing during the minority of her children as have since been drawn in a single year? Was it proved that she had all that hidden money in the banks of Italy, as people said? Far from that, it was found after her death that she had not a single sou; and, as I have heard some of her financiers and some of her ladies say, she was indebted eight thousand crowns, the wages of her ladies, gentlemen, and household officers, due a year, and the revenue of the whole year spent; so that some months before her death her financiers showed her these necessities; but she laughed and said one must praise God for all and find something to live on. That was her avarice and the great treasure she amassed, as people said! She never amassed anything, for she had a heart wholly noble, liberal, and magnificent, like her great uncle, Pope Leo, and that magnificent Lorenzo de' Medici. She spent or gave away everything; erecting buildings, spending in honourable magnificences, and taking pleasure in giving recreations to her people and her Court, such as festivals, balls, dances, tournaments and spearing the ring [*couremens de bague*], of which latter she held three that were very superb during her lifetime: one at Fontainebleau on the Shrove Tuesday after the

first troubles; where there were tourneys and breaking of lances and combats at the barrier, — in short, all sorts of feats of arms, with a comedy on the subject of the beautiful Genevra of Ariosto, which she caused to be represented by Mme. d'Angoulême and her most beautiful and virtuous princesses and the ladies and damoiselles of her Court, who certainly played it very well, and so that nothing finer was ever seen. The second was at Bayonne, at the interview between the queen and her good daughter Élisabeth, Queen of Spain, where the magnificence was such in all things that the Spanish, who are very disdainful of other countries than their own, swore they had never seen anything finer, and that their own king could not approach it; and thus they returned to Spain much edified.

I know that many in France blamed this expense as being superfluous; but the queen said that she did it to show foreigners that France was not so totally ruined and poverty-stricken because of the late wars as they thought; and that if for such tourneys she was able to spend so much, for matters of importance she could surely do better, and that France was all the more feared and esteemed, whether through the sight of such wealth and richness, or through that of the prowess of her gentlemen, so brave and adroit at arms; as indeed there were many there very good to see and worthy to be admired. Moreover, it was very reasonable that for the greatest queen of Christendom, the most beautiful, the most virtuous, and the best, some great solemn festival above all others should be held. And I can assure you that if this had not been done, the foreigners would have mocked us and gone back to Spain thinking and holding us all in France to be beggars.

Therefore it was not without good and careful consideration that this wise and judicious queen made this outlay. She

made another very fine one on the arrival of the Poles in Paris, whom she feasted most superbly in her Tuileries; after which, in a great hall built on purpose and surrounded by an infinite number of torches, she showed them the finest ballet that was ever seen on earth (I may indeed say so); the which was composed of sixteen of her best-taught ladies and damoiselles, who appeared in a great rock [*roc*, grotto ?] all silvered, where they were seated in niches, like vapours around it. These sixteen ladies represented the sixteen provinces of France, with the most melodious music ever heard; and after having made, in this rock, the tour of the hall, like a parade in camp, and letting themselves be seen of every one, they descended from the rock and formed themselves into a little battalion, fantastically imagined, with violins to the number of thirty sounding a warlike air extremely pleasant; and thus they marched to the air of the violins, with a fine cadence they never lost, and so approached, and stopped before their Majesties. After which they danced their ballet, most fantastically invented, with so many turns, counterturns, and gyrations, such twining and blending, such advancing and pausing (though no lady failed to find her place and rank), that all present were astonished to see how in such a maze order was not lost for a moment, and that all these ladies had their judgment clear and held it good, so well were they taught! This fantastic ballet lasted at least one hour, the which being concluded, all these sixteen ladies, representing, as I have said, the sixteen provinces, advanced to the king, the queen, the King of Poland, Monsieur his brother, the King and Queen of Navarre, and other grandees of France and Poland, presenting to each a golden salver as large as the palm of the hand, finely enamelled and beautifully chased, on which were engraved the fruits and products of each province in which they were most fertile, such as

citrons and oranges in Provence, cereals in Champagne, wines in Burgundy, and in Guyenne warriors, — great honour that for Guyenne certainly! And so on, through the other provinces.

At Bayonne the like presents were made, and a combat fought, which I could represent very well, with the presents and the names of those who received them, but it would be too long. At Bayonne it was the men who gave to the ladies; here, it was the ladies giving to the men. Take note that all these inventions came from no other devising and brain than that of the queen; for she was mistress and inventress of everything; she had such faculty that whatever magnificences were done at Court, hers surpassed all others. For which reason they used to say there was no one like the queen-mother for doing fine things. If such outlays were costly, they gave great pleasure; and people often said she wished to imitate the Roman emperors, who studied to exhibit games to their people and give them pleasures, and so amuse them as not to leave them leisure to do harm.

Besides the pleasure she took in giving pleasure to her people, she also gave them much to earn; for she liked all sorts of artisans and paid them well; employing them each in his own art, so that they never wanted for work, especially masons and builders, as is shown by her beautiful houses: the Tuileries (still unfinished), Saint-Maur, Monceaux, and Chenonceaux. Also she liked learned men, and was pleased to read, and she made others read, the books they presented to her, or those that she knew they had written. All were acceptable, even to the fine invectives which were published against her, about which she scoffed and laughed, without anger, calling those who wrote them gabblers and "givers of trash" — that was her use of the word.

She wished to know everything. On the voyage to Lorraine, during the second troubles, the Huguenots had with them a fine culverin to which they gave the name of "the queen-mother." They were forced to bury it at Villenozze, not being able to drag it on account of its long shafts and bad harness and weight; after which it never could be found again. The queen, hearing that they had given it her name, wanted to know why. A certain person, having been much urged by her to tell her, replied: "Because, madame, it has a calibre [diameter] broader and bigger than that of others." The queen was the first to laugh at this reply.

She spared no pains in reading anything that took her fancy. I saw her once, having embarked at Blaye to go and dine at Bourg, reading the whole way from a parchment, like any lawyer or notary, a *procès-verbal* made on Derbois, favourite secretary of the late M. le connétable, as to certain underhand dealings and correspondence of which he was accused and for which imprisoned at Bayonne. She never took her eyes off it until she had read it through; and there were more than ten pages of parchment. When she was not hindered, she read herself all letters of importance, and frequently with her own hand made replies; I saw her once, after dinner, write twenty long letters herself.

She wrote and spoke French very well, although an Italian; and even to persons of her own nation she usually spoke it, so much did she honour France and its language; taking pains to exhibit its fine speech to foreigners, grandees, and ambassadors, who came to visit her after seeing the king. She always answered them very pertinently, with great grace and majesty; as I have also seen and heard her do to the courts of parliament, both publicly and privately;

often controlling the latter finely when they rambled in talk or were over-cautious, or would not comply with the edicts made in her privy council and the ordinances issued by the king and herself. You may be sure she spoke as a queen and made herself feared as one. I saw her once at Bordeaux when she took her daughter Marguerite to her husband, the King of Navarre. She had commanded that court of parliament to come and be spoken to, — they not being willing to abolish a certain brotherhood, by them invented and maintained, which she was determined to break up, foreseeing that it would bring some results in the end which might be prejudicial to the State. They came to meet her in the garden of the Bishop's house, where she was walking one Sunday morning. One among them spoke for all, and gave her to understand the fruitfulness of this brotherhood and the utility it was to the public. She, without being prepared, replied so well and with such apt words, and apparent and appropriate reasons to show it was ill-founded and odious, that there was no one present who did not admire the mind of the queen and remain confused and astonished when, as her last word, she said: "No, I will, and the king my son wills that it be exterminated, and never heard of again, for secret reasons that I shall not tell you, besides those that I have told you; and if not, I will make you feel what it is to disobey the king and me." So each and all went away and nothing more was said of it.

She did these turns very often to the princes and the greatest people, when they had done some great wrong and made her so angry that she took her haughty air, — no one on earth being so superb and stately as she, when needful, sparing no truths to any one. I have seen the late M. de Savoie, who was intimate with the emperor, the King of Spain, and so many grandees, fear and respect her more than

if she had been his mother, and M. de Lorraine the same, — in short, all the great people of Christendom; I could give many examples; but another time, in due course, I will tell them; just now it suffices to say what I have said.

Among other perfections she was a good Christian and very devout; always making her Easters, and never failing any day to attend divine service at mass and vespers; which she rendered very agreeable to pious persons, by the good singers of her chapel, — she being careful to collect the most exquisite; also she herself loved music by nature, and often gave pleasure with it in her apartment, which was never closed to virtuous ladies and honourable men, she seeing all and every one, not restricting it as they do in Spain, and also in her own land of Italy; nor yet as our later queens, Isabella of Austria and Louise of Lorraine, have done; but saying, like King François, her father-in-law (whom she greatly honoured, he having set her up and made her free), that she wished to keep her Court as a good Frenchwoman, and as the king, her husband, would have wished; so that her apartments were the pleasure of the Court.

She had, ordinarily, very beautiful and virtuous maids of honour, who conversed with us daily in her antechamber, discoursing and chatting so wisely and modestly that none of us would have dared to do otherwise; for the gentlemen who failed in this were banished and threatened, and in fear of worse until she pardoned and forgave them, she being kind in herself and very ready to do so.

In short, her company and her Court were a true paradise in the world, and a school of all virtue and honour, the ornament of France, as the foreigners who came there knew well and said; for they were all most politely received, and her ladies and maids of honour were commanded to adorn themselves at their coming like goddesses, and to entertain these visitors,

not amusing themselves elsewhere; otherwise she taunted them well and reprimanded them.

In fact, her Court was such that when she died the voices of all declared that the Court was no longer a Court, and that never again would France have a true queen-mother. What a Court it was! such as, I believe, no Emperor of Rome in the olden time ever held for ladies, nor any of our Kings of France. Though it is true that the great Emperor Charlemagne, King of France, during his lifetime took great pleasure in making and maintaining a grand and full Court of peers, dukes, counts, palatines, barons, and knights of France; also of ladies, their wives and daughters, with others of all countries, to pay court and honour (as the old romances of that day have said) to the empress and queen, and to see the fine jousts, tournaments, and magnificences done there by knights-errant coming from all parts. But what of that? These fine, grand assemblies came together not oftener than three or four times a year; at the end of each fête they departed and retired to their houses and estates until the next time. Besides, some have said that in his old age Charlemagne was much given over to women, though always of good company; and that Louis le Debonnaire, on ascending the throne, was obliged to banish his sisters to other places for the scandal of their lives with men; and also that he drove from Court a number of ladies who belonged to the joyous band. Charlemagne's Courts were never of long duration (I speak now of his great years), for he amused himself in those days with war, according to our old romances, and in his last years his Court was too dissolute, as I have already said. But the Court of our King Henri II. and the queen his wife, was held daily, whether in war or peace, and whether it resided in one place or another for months, or went to other castles and pleasure-houses of our kings,

who are not lacking in them, having more than the kings of other countries.

This large and noble company, keeping always together, at least the greater part of them, came and went with its queen, so that usually her Court was filled by at least three hundred ladies and damoiselles. The intendants of the king's houses and the quartermasters affirmed that they occupied fully one-half of the rooms, as I myself have seen during the thirty-three years I lived at Court, except when at war or in foreign parts. Having returned, I was always there; for the sojourn was to me most agreeable, not seeing elsewhere anything finer; in fact I think, since the world was, nothing has ever been seen like it; and as the noble names of these beautiful ladies who assisted our queen in adorning her Court should not be overlooked, I place them here, according as I remember them from the end of the queen's married life and throughout her widowhood, for before that time I was too young to know them.

First, I place Mesdames the daughters of France. I place them first because they never lost their rank, and go before all others, so grand and noble is their house, to wit: —

Madame Élisabeth de France, afterwards Queen of Spain.

Madame Claude, afterwards Duchesse de Lorraine.

Madame Marguerite, afterwards Queen of Navarre.

Madame the king's sister, afterwards Duchesse de Savoie.

The Queen of Scots, afterwards dauphine and Queen of France.

The Queen of Navarre, Jeanne d'Albret.

Madame Catherine, her daughter, to-day called Madame the king's [Henri IV.] sister.

Madame Diane, natural daughter of the king [Henri II.], afterwards legitimatized, the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

Madame d'Enghien, of the house of Estouteville.

Madame la Princesse de Condé, of the house of Roye.

Madame de Nevers, of the house of Vendôme.

Madame de Guise, of the house of Ferrara.

Madame Diane de Poitiers, Duchesse de Valentinois.

Mesdames d'Aumale and de Bouillon, her daughters.[1]

Need I name more? No, for my memory could not furnish them. There are so many other ladies and maids that I beg them to excuse me if I pass them by with my pen,—not that I do not greatly value and esteem them, but I should dream over them and amuse myself too much. To make an end, I must say that in all this company there was nothing to find fault with in their day; beauty abounded, all majesty, all charm, all grace; happy was he who could touch with love such ladies, and happy those who could that love *escapar*. I swear to you that I have named only those ladies and damoiselles who were beautiful, agreeable, very accomplished, and well sufficient to set fire to the whole world. Indeed, in their best days they burned up a good part of it, as much us gentlemen of the Court as others who approached the flame; to some of whom they were gentle, aimable, favourable, and courteous. I speak of none here, hoping to make good tales about them in this book before I finish it, and of others whose names are not comprised here; but the whole told so discreetly, without scandal, that nothing will be known, for the curtain of silence will cover their names; so that if by chance they should any of them read tales of themselves they will not be annoyed. Besides, though the pleasures of love cannot last forever, by reason of many inconveniences, hindrances, and changes, the memories of the past are always pleasing.

[1] Here follow the names of ninety-three ladies and sixty-six damoiselles; among the latter are "Mesdamoiselles Flammin (Fleming?) Veton (Seaton?) Beton (Beaton?) Leviston, escossoises." The three first-named on the above list are the daughters of Henri II. and Catherine de' Medici. — Tr.



Ball at the Court of Henri III

[This refers to "Les Dames Galantes," and not to the present volume.]

Now, to thoroughly consider how fine a sight was this troupe of beautiful ladies and damoiselles, creatures divine rather than human, we must imagine the entries into Paris and other cities, the sacred and superlative bridals of our kings of France, and their sisters, the daughters of France; such as those of the dauphin, of King Charles, of King Henri III., of the Queen of Spain, of Madame de Lorraine, of the Queen of Navarre, not to speak of many other grand weddings of the princes and princesses, like that of M. de Joyeuse, which would have surpassed them all if the Queen of Navarre had been there. Also we must picture to ourselves the interview at Bayonne, the arrival of the Poles, and an infinite number of other and like magnificences, which I could never finish naming, where I saw these ladies appear, each more beautiful than the rest; some more finely appointed and better dressed than others, because for such festivals, in addition to their great means, the king and queen would give them splendid liveries.

In short, nothing was ever seen finer, more dazzling, dainty, superb; the glory of Niquée never approached it [enchanted palace in "Amadis"]. All this shone in a ballroom of the Tuileries or the Louvre as the stars of heaven in the azure sky. The queen-mother wished and commanded her ladies always to appear in grand and superb apparel, though she herself during her widowhood never clothed herself in worldly silks, unless they were lugubrious, but always properly and so well-fitting that she looked the queen above all else. It is true that on the days of the weddings of her two sons Henri and Charles, she wore gowns of black velvet, wishing, she said, to solemnize the event by so signal an act. While she was married she always dressed

very richly and superbly, and looked what she was. And it was fine to see and admire her in the general processions that were made, both in Paris and other cities, such as the Fête Dieu, that of the Rameaux [Palm Sunday], bearing palms and branches with such grace, and on Candlemas Day, when the torches were borne by all the Court, the flames of which contended against their own brilliancy. At these three processions, which are most solemn, we certainly saw nothing but beauty, grace, a noble bearing, a fine gait and splendid apparel, all of which delighted the spectators.

It was fine also to see the queen in her married life going through the country in her litter, being pregnant, or afterwards on horseback attended by forty or fifty ladies and damoiselles mounted on handsome hackneys well caparisoned, and sitting their horses with such good grace that the men could not do better, either in equestrian style or apparel; their hats adorned with plumes which floated in the air as if demanding either love or war. Virgil, who took upon himself to write of the apparel of Queen Dido when she went to the chase, says nothing that approaches the luxury of that of our queen with her ladies, may it not displease her, as I think I have said elsewhere.

This queen (made by the act of the great King François), who introduced this beautiful pageantry, never forgot or let slip anything of the kind she had once learned, but always wanted to imitate or surpass it; I have heard her speak three or four times in my life on this subject. Those who have seen things as I did still feel their souls enchanted like mine, for what I say is true; I know it having seen it.

So there is the Court of our queen. Unhappy was the day when she died! I have heard tell that our present king [Henri IV.], some eighteen months after he saw himself more in hope and prospect of becoming King of France,

began one day to discourse with the late M. le Maréchal de Biron, on the plans and projects he would undertake to make his Court prosperous and fine and in all things like that of our said queen, for at that time it was in its greatest lustre and splendour. M. le maréchal answered: "It is not in your power, nor in that of any king who will ever reign, unless you can manage with God that he shall resuscitate the queen-mother, and bring her round to you." But that was not what the king wanted, for when she died there was no one whom he hated so much, but without grounds, as I could see, and as he should have known better than I.

How luckless was the day on which such a queen died, at the very point when we had such great necessity for her, and still have!

She died at Blois of sadness caused by the massacre which there took place, and the melancholy tragedy there played, seeing that, without reflection, she had brought the princes to Blois thinking to do well; whereas it was true, as M. le Cardinal de Bourbon said to her: "Alas! madame, you have led us all to butchery without intending it." That so touched her heart, and also the death of those poor men, that she took to her bed, having previously felt ill, and never rose again.

They say that when the king announced to her the murder of M. de Guise, saying that he was now absolutely king, without equal, or master, she asked him if he had put the affairs of his kingdom in order before striking the blow. To which he answered yes. "God grant it, my son," she said. Very prudent that she was, she foresaw plainly what would happen to him, and to all the kingdom.[1]

Persons have spoken diversely as to her death, and even as

[1] Henri III. convoked the States-General at Blois in 1588; the Duc de Guise (Henri, le Balafré) was there assassinated, by the king's order, December 23, 1588; his brother, Cardinal de Bourbon, the next day. — Tr.

to poison. Possibly it was so, possibly not; but she was held to have died of desperation, and she had reason to do so.

She was placed on her state-bed, as one of her ladies told me, neither more nor less like Queen Anne of whom I have already spoken, clothed in the same royal garments that the said Queen Anne wore, they not having served since her death for any others; and thus she was borne to the church of the castle, with the same pomp and solemnity as Queen Anne, where she lies and rests still. The king wished to take her to Chartres and thence to Saint-Denis, to put her with the king, her husband, in the same tomb which she had caused to be made, built, and constructed, so noble and superb, but the war which came on prevented it.

This is what I can say at this time of this great queen, who has given assuredly such noble grounds to speak worthily of her that this short discourse is not enough for her praise. I know that well; also that the quality of my speech does not suffice, for better speakers than I would be insufficient. At any rate, such as my discourse is, I lay it, in all humility and devotion, at her feet; also I would avoid too great prolixity, for which indeed I feel myself too capable; but I hope I shall not separate from her much, although in my discourses I shall be silent, and only speak of what her noble and incomparable virtues command me, giving me ample matter so to do, I having seen all that I have written of her; and as for what had happened before my time, I heard it from persons most illustrious; and thus I shall do in all my books.

This queen, who was of many kings the mother,
Of queens also, belonging here to France,
Died when we had most need of her support;
For none but she could give us true assistance.

Mézeray [in his "History of France"], who never thinks of the dramatic, nevertheless makes known to us at the start his principal personages; he shows them more especially in action, without detaching them too much from the general sentiment and interests of which they are the leaders and representatives, while, at the same time, he leaves to each his individual physiognomy. The old Connétable de Montmorency, the Guises, Admiral de Coligny, the Chancellor de l'Hôpital define themselves on his pages by their conduct and proceedings even more than by the judgment he awards them. Catherine de' Medici is painted there in all her dissimulation and her network of artifices, in which she was often caught herself; ambitious of sovereign power without possessing either the force or the genius of it; striving to obtain it by craft, and using for this purpose a continual system of what we should call to-day *see-sawing;* "rousing and elevating for a time one faction, putting to sleep or lowering another; uniting herself sometimes with the feeblest side out of caution, lest the stronger should crush her; sometimes with the stronger from necessity; at times standing neutral when she felt herself strong enough to command both sides, but without intention to extinguish either." Far from being always too Catholic, there are moments when she seems to lean to the Reformed religion and to wish to grant too much to that party; and this with more sincerity, perhaps, than belonged to her naturally. The Catherine de' Medici, such as she presents herself and is developed in plain truth on the pages of Mézeray is well calculated to tempt a modern writer. As there is nothing new but that which is old, for often discoveries are nothing more than that which was once known and is forgotten, the day when a modern historian shall take up the Catherine de' Medici of Mézeray and give her some of the rather forced features which are to the taste of the

present day, there will come a great cry of astonishment and admiration, and the critics will register a new discovery.[1]

M. Niel, librarian to the ministry of the Interior, an enlightened amateur of the arts and of history, has been engaged since 1848 in publishing a series of Portraits or "Crayons" of the celebrated personages of the sixteenth century, kings, queens, mistresses of kings, etc., the whole forming already a folio volume. M. Niel has applied himself in this collection to reproduce none but authentic portraits and solely from the original, and he has confined himself to a single form of portraiture, that which was drawn in crayons of divers colours by artists of the sixteenth century. "They designated in those days by the name of 'crayons,'" he observes, "certain portraits executed on paper in red chalk, in black lead, and in white chalk, shaded and touched in a way to present the effect of painting." These designs, faithfully reproduced, in which the red tone predominates, are for the most part originally due to unknown artists, who seem to have belonged to the true French lineage of art. They resemble the humble companions and followers of our chroniclers who simply sought in their rapid sketches to catch physiognomies, such as they saw them, with truth and candour; the likeness alone concerned them.

François I. leads the procession with his obscure wives, and one, at least, of his obscure mistresses, the Comtesse de Châteaubriant. Henri II. succeeds him, giving one hand to Catherine de' Medici, the other to Diane de Poitiers. We are shown a Marie Stuart, young, before and after her widow-

[1] Honoré de Balzac's volume, in the Philosophical Series of his "Comedy of Human Life," on Catherine de' Medici, while called a romance, is really an admirable and carefully drawn historical portrait, and might be read to profit in connection with Brantôme's account of her. — Tr.

hood. In general, the men gain most from this rapid reproduction of feature; whereas with the women it needs an effort of the imagination to catch their delicacy and the flower of their beauty. Charles IX. at twelve years of age, and again at eighteen and twenty, is there to the life and caught from nature. Henri IV. is shown to us younger and fresher than as we are wont to see him, — a Henri de Navarre quite novel and before his beard grizzled. His first wife, Marguerite de Valois, is portrayed at her most beauteous age, but so masked by her costume and cramped in her ruff that we need to be aware of her charm to be certain that the doll-like figure had any. Gabrielle d'Estrées, who stands aloof, stiffly imprisoned in her gorgeous clothes, also needs explanation and reflection before she appears what she really was. The testimony of "Notices" aids these portraits; for M. Niel accompanies his personages with remarks made with erudition and an inquiring mind.

One of the brief writings of that period which make known clearly the person and nature of Henri IV. is the Memoir of the first president of Normandy, Claude Groulard, at all times faithful to the king, who has left us a naïve account of his frequent journeys to that prince and the sojourns he made with him. Among many remarks which Groulard has collected from the lips of Henri IV. there is one that paints the king well in his sound good sense, his freedom from rancour, and his knowledge — always practical, never ideal — of human beings. Groulard is relating the approaching marriage of the king with a princess of Florence. When Henri IV. announced it to him the worthy president replied by an erudite comparison with the lance of Achilles, saying that the Florentine house would thus repair the wounds it had given to France in the person of Catherine de' Medici. "But I ask you," said Henri IV., speaking there-

upon of Catherine and excusing her, "I ask you what a poor woman could do, left by the death of her husband, with five little children on her arms, and two families in France who were thinking to grasp the crown, — ours and the Guises. Was she not compelled to play strange parts to deceive first one and then the other, in order to guard, as she has done, her sons, who have successively reigned through the wise conduct of that shrewd woman? I am surprised that she never did worse."

SAINTE-BEUVE, *Causeries du Lundi* (1855).

DISCOURSE III.

MARIE STUART, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND, FORMERLY QUEEN OF OUR FRANCE.

THOSE who wish to write of this illustrious Queen of Scotland have two very ample subjects: one her life, the other her death; both very ill accompanied by good fortune, as I shall show at certain points in this short Discourse in form of epitome, and not a long history, which I leave to be written by persons more learned and better given to writing than I.

This queen had a father, King James, of worth and valour, and a very good Frenchman; in which he was right. After he was widowed of Madame Magdelaine, daughter of France, he asked King François for some honourable and virtuous princess of his kingdom with whom to re-marry, desiring nothing so much as to continue his alliance with France.

King François, not knowing whom to choose better to content the good prince, gave him the daughter of M. de Guise, Claude de Lorraine, then the widow of M. de Longueville, wise, virtuous, and honourable, of which King James was very glad and esteemed himself fortunate to take her; and after he had taken and espoused her he found himself the same; the kingdom of Scotland also, which she governed very wisely after she was widowed; which event happened in a few years after her marriage, but not before she had produced a fine issue, namely this most beautiful princess in the world, our queen, of whom I now speak, she being, as

one might say, scarcely born and still at the breast, when the English invaded Scotland. Her mother was then forced to hide her from place to place in Scotland from fear of that fury; and, without the good succour King Henri sent her she would scarce have been saved; and even so they had to put her on vessels and expose her to the waves, the storms and winds of the sea and convey her to France for greater security; where certainly ill fortune, not being able to cross the seas with her or not daring to attack her in France, left her so alone that good fortune took her by the hand. And, as her youth grew on, we saw her great beauty and her great virtues grow likewise; so that, coming to her fifteenth year, her beauty shone like the light at mid-day, effacing the sun when it shines the brightest, so beauteous was her body. As for her soul, that was equal; she had made herself learned in Latin, so that, being between thirteen and fourteen years of age, she declaimed before King Henri, the queen, and all the Court, publicly in the hall of the Louvre, an harangue in Latin, which she had made herself, maintaining and defending, against common opinion, that it was well becoming to women to know letters and the liberal arts. Think what a rare thing and admirable it was, to see this wise and beautiful young queen thus orate in Latin, which she knew and understood right well, for I was there and saw her. Also she made Antoine Fochain, of Chauny in Vermandois, prepare for her a rhetoric in French, which still exists, that she might the better understand it, and make herself as eloquent in French as she had been in Latin, and better than if she had been born in France. It was good to see her speak to every one, whether to great or small.

As long as she lived in France she always reserved two hours daily to study and read; so that there was no human



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knowledge she could not talk upon. Above all, she loved poesy and poets, but especially M. de Ronsard, M. du Bellay, and M. de Maison-Fleur,[1] who all made beautiful poems and elegies upon her, and also upon her departure from France, which I have often seen her reading to herself, in France and in Scotland, with tears in her eyes and sighs from her heart.

She was a poet herself and composed verses, of which I have seen some that were fine and well done and in no wise resembling those they have laid to her account on her love for the Earl of Bothwell, which are too coarse and too ill-polished to have come from her beautiful making. M. de Ronsard was of my opinion as to this one day when we were reading and discussing them. Those she composed were far more beautiful and dainty, and quickly done, for I have often seen her retire to her cabinet and soon return to show them to such of us good folk as were there present. Moreover she wrote well in prose, especially letters, of which I have seen many that were very fine and eloquent and lofty. At all times when she talked with others she used a most gentle, dainty, and agreeable style of speech, with kindly majesty, mingled, however, with discreet and modest reserve, and above all with beautiful grace; so that even her native tongue, which in itself is very rustic, barbarous, ill-sounding, and uncouth, she spoke so gracefully, toning it in such a way, that she made it seem beautiful and agreeable in her, though never so in others.

See what virtue there was in such beauty and grace that they could turn coarse barbarism into sweet civility and social grace. We must not be surprised therefore that being dressed (as I have seen her) in the barbarous costume of the uncivilized people of her country, she appeared, in

[1] See Appendix.

mortal body and coarse ungainly clothing a true goddess. Those who have seen her thus dressed will admit this truth; and those who did not see her can look at her portrait, in which she is thus attired. I have heard the queen-mother, and the king too, say that she looked more beautiful, more agreeable, more desirable in that picture than in any of the others. But how else could she look, whether in her beautiful rich jewels, in French or Spanish style, or wearing her Italian caps, or in her mourning garments? — which latter made her most beautiful to see, for the whiteness of her face contended with the whiteness of her veil as to which should carry the day; but the texture of her veil lost it; the snow of her pure face dimmed the other, so that when she appeared at Court in her mourning the following song was made upon her: —

"L'on voit, sous blanc atour
En grand deuil et tristesse,
Se pourmener mainct tour
De beauté la déese,
Tenant le trait en main
De son fils inhumain;

"Et Amour, sans fronteau,
Voletter autour d'elle,
Desguisant son bandeau
En un funebre voile,
Où sont ces mots ecrits:
Mourir ou être pris."[1]

That is how this princess appeared under all fashions of clothes, whether barbarous, worldly, or austere. She had also one other perfection with which to charm the world, — a voice most sweet and excellent; for she sang well, attuning her voice to the lute, which she touched very prettily with that white hand and those beautiful fingers, perfectly made,

[1] See Appendix.

yielding in nothing to those of Aurora. What more remains to tell of her beauty? — if not this saying about her: that the sun of her Scotland was very unlike her, for on certain days of the year it shines but five hours, while she shone ever, so that her clear rays illumined her land and her people, who of all others needed light, being far estranged from the sun of heaven. Ah! kingdom of Scotland, I think your days are shorter now than they ever were, and your nights the longer, since you have lost the princess who illumined you! But you have been ungrateful; you never recognized your duty of fidelity, as you should have done; which I shall speak of presently.

This lady and princess pleased France so much that King Henri was urged to give her in alliance to the dauphin, his beloved son, who, for his part, was madly in love with her. The marriage was therefore solemnly celebrated in the great church and the palace of Paris; where we saw this queen appear more beauteous than a goddess from the skies, whether in the morning, going to her espousals in noble majesty, or leading, after dinner, at the ball, or advancing in the evening with modest steps to offer and perform her vows to Hymen; so that the voice of all as one man resounded and proclaimed throughout the Court and the great city that happy a hundredfold was he, the prince, thus joined to such a princess; and even if Scotland were a thing of price its queen out-valued it; for had she neither crown nor sceptre, her person and her glorious beauty were worth a kingdom; therefore, being a queen, she brought to France and to her husband a double fortune.

This was what the world went saying of her; and for this reason she was called queen-dauphine and her husband the king-dauphin, they living together in great love and pleasant concord.

Next, King Henri dying, they came to be King and Queen of France, the king and queen of two great kingdoms, happy, and most happy in themselves, had death not seized the king and left her widowed in the sweet April of her finest youth, having enjoyed together of love and pleasure and felicity but four short years, — a felicity indeed of short duration, which evil fortune might well have spared; but no, malignant as she is, she wished to miserably treat this princess, who made a song herself upon her sorrows in this wise: —

En mon triste et doux chant,
D'un ton fort lamentable,
Je jette un deuil tranchant,
De perte incomparable,
Et en soupirs cuisans,
Passe mes meilleurs ans.

Fut-il un tel malheur
De dure destinée,
N'y si triste douleur
De dame fortunée,
Qui mon cœur et mon œil
Vois en bierre et cercueil,

Qui en mon doux printemps
Et fleur de ma jeunesse,
Toutes les peines sens
D'une extresme tristesse,
Et en rien n'ay plaisir
Qu'en regret et desir?

Ce qui m'estoit plaisant
Ores m'est peine dure;
Le jour le plus luisant
M'est nuit noire et obscure.
Et n'est rien si exquis
Qui de moy soit requis.

J'ay au cœur et à l'œil
Un portrait et image

Qui figure mon deuil
Et mon pasle visage,
De violettes teint,
Qui est l'amoureux teint.

Pour mon mal estranger
Je ne m'arreste en place;
Mais j'en ay beau changer,
Si ma douleur n'efface;
Car mon pis et mon mieux
Sont les plus deserts lieux.

Si en quelque séjour,
Soit en bois ou en prée.
Soit sur l'aube du jour,
Ou soit sur la vesprée,
Sans cesse mon cœur sent
Le regret d'un absent.

Si parfois vers les cieux
Viens à dresser ma veue,
Le doux traict de ses yeux
Je vois en une nue;
Ou bien je le vois en l'eau,
Comme dans un tombeau.

Si je suis en repos
Sommeillant sur ma couche,
J'oy qu'il me tient propos,
Je le sens qui me touche:
En labeur, en recoy
Tousjours est près de moy.

Je ne vois autre object,
Pour beau qu'il présente
A qui que soit subject,
Oncques mon cœur consente,
Exempt de perfection
A cette affection.

Mets, chanson, icy fin
A si triste complainte,

Dont sera le refrein :
Amour vraye et non feinte
Pour la separation
N'aura diminution.[1]

Such are the regrets which this sad queen went piteously singing, and manifesting even more by her pale face; for, from the time she became a widow, I never saw her colour return during the time I had the honour to see her in France and in Scotland; whither at the end of eighteen months she was forced to go, to her great regret, to pacify her kingdom, much divided on account of religion. Alas! she had neither wish nor will to go. I have often heard her say she dreaded that journey like death; and preferred a hundredfold to stay in France a simple dowager, and would content herself with Touraine and Poitou for her dowry, rather than go to reign in her savage country; but messieurs her uncles, at least some of them, but not all, advised her, indeed they urged her (I will not tell the occasions), for which they have since repented sorely.

As to this, there is no doubt that if, at her departure King Charles, her husband's brother, had been of age to marry, and not so small and young (though much in love with her, as I have seen), he would never have let her go, but resolutely would have wedded her; for I have seen him so in love that never did he look upon her portrait that his eyes were not fixed and ravished, as though he could not take them from it nor yet be satisfied. And often have I heard him call her the most beauteous princess ever born into the world, and say how he thought the king, his brother, too happy to have enjoyed the love of such a princess, and that he ought in no wise to regret his death in the tomb since he had possessed in this world such beauty and pleasure for

[1] See Appendix.

the little time he stayed here; and also that such happiness was worth a kingdom. So that had she remained in France he would surely have wedded her; he was resolved upon it, although she was his sister-in-law, but the pope would never have refused the dispensation, seeing that he had already in like case granted one to his own subject, M. de Lové, and also to the Marquis d'Aguilar in Spain, and many others in that country, where they make no difficulty in maintaining their estates and do not waste and dissipate them, as we do in France.

Much discourse on this subject have I heard from him, and from many, which I shall omit, not to wander from the topic of our queen, who was at last persuaded, as I have said, to return to her kingdom of Scotland; but her voyage being postponed till the spring she did so much to delay it from month to month that she did not depart until the end of the month of August. I must mention that this spring, in which she thought to leave, came so tardily, and was so cold and grievous, that in the month of April it gave no sign of donning its beautiful green robe or its lovely flowers. On which the gallants of the Court augured and proclaimed that the spring had changed its pleasant season for a hard and grievous winter, and would not wear its beauteous colours or its verdure because it mourned the departure of this sweet queen, who was its lustre. M. de Maison-Fleur, a charming knight for letters and for arms, made on that theme a most fine elegy.

The beginning of the autumn having come, the queen, after thus delaying, was forced to abandon France; and having travelled by land to Calais, accompanied by all her uncles, M. de Nemours, most of the great and honourable of the Court, together with the ladies, like Mme. de Guise and others, all regretting and weeping hot tears for the loss

of such a queen, she found in port two galleys: one that of M. de Mevillon, the other that of Captain Albise, with two convoying vessels for sole armament. After six days' rest at Calais, having said her piteous farewells all full of sighs to the great company about her, from the greatest to the least, she embarked, having her uncles with her, Messieurs d'Aumale, the grand prior, and d'Elbœuf, and M. d'Amville (now M. le Connétable), together with many of us, all nobles, on board the galley of M. de Mevillon, as being the best and handsomest.

As the vessel began to leave the port, the anchor being up, we saw, in the open sea, a vessel sink before us and perish, and many of the sailors drown for not having taken the channel rightly; on seeing which the queen cried out incontinently: "Ah, my God! what an omen is this for my journey!" The galley being now out of port and a fresh wind rising, we began to make sail, and the convicts rested on their oars. The queen, without thinking of other action, leaned her two arms on the poop of the galley, beside the rudder, and burst into tears, casting her beauteous eyes to the port and land she had left, saying ever these sad words: "Adieu, France! adieu, France!" — repeating them again and again; and this sad exercise she did for nearly five hours, until the night began to fall, when they asked her if she would not come away from there and take some supper. On that, her tears redoubling, she said these words: "This is indeed the hour, my dear France, when I must lose you from sight, because the gloomy night, envious of my content in seeing you as long as I am able, hangs a black veil before mine eyes to rob me of that joy. Adieu, then, my dear France; I shall see you nevermore!"

Then she retired, saying she had done the contrary of Dido, who looked to the sea when Æneas left her, while she

had looked to land. She wished to lie down without eating more than a salad, and as she would not descend into the cabin of the poop, they brought her bed and set it up on the deck of the poop, where she rested a little, but did not cease her sighs and tears. She commanded the steersman to wake her as soon as it was day if he saw or could even just perceive the coasts of France, and not to fear to call her. In this, fortune favoured her; for the wind having ceased and the vessel having again had recourse to oars, but little way was made during the night, so that when day appeared the shores of France could still be seen; and the steersman not having failed to obey her, she rose in her bed and gazed at France again, and as long as she could see it. But the galley now receding, her contentment receded too, and again she said those words: "Adieu, my France; I think that I shall never see you more."

Did she desire, this once, that an English armament (with which we were threatened) should appear and constrain her to give up her voyage and return to the port she had left? But if so, God in that would not favour her wishes, for, without further hindrance of any kind we reached Petit-Lict [Leith]. Of the voyage I must tell a little incident: the first evening after we embarked, the Seigneur Chastellard (the same who was afterwards executed for presumption, not for crime, as I shall tell), being a charming cavalier, a man of good sword and good letters, said this pretty thing when he saw them lighting the binnacle lamp: "There is no need of that lamp or this torch to light us by sea, for the eyes of our queen are dazzling enough to flash their fine fires along the waves and illume them, if need be."

I must note that the day before we arrived at Scotland, being a Sunday, so great a fog arose that we could not see from the poop to the mast of the galley; at which the pilot and the

overseers of the galley-slaves were much confounded,—so much so, that out of necessity we had to cast anchor in open sea, and take soundings to know where we were. The fog lasted all one day and all the night until eight o'clock on the following morning, when we found ourselves surrounded by innumerable reefs; so that had we gone forward, or even to one side, the ship would have struck and we should have perished. On which the queen said that, for her part, she should not have cared, wishing for nothing so much as death; but that not for her whole kingdom of Scotland would she have wished it or willed it for others. Having now sighted and seen (for the fog had risen) the coast of Scotland, there were some among us who augured and predicted upon the said fog, that it boded we were now to land in a quarrelsome, mischief-making, unpleasant kingdom [*royaume brouille, brouillon, et mal plaisant*].

We entered and cast anchor at Petit-Lict, where the principal persons of that place and Islebourg [Edinburgh] were gathered to meet their queen; and then, having sojourned at Petit-Lict only two hours, it was necessary to continue our way to Isleboarg, which was barely a league farther. The queen went on horseback, and the ladies and seigneurs on nags of the country, such as they were, and saddled and bridled the same. On seeing which accoutrements the queen began to weep and say that these were not the pomps, the dignities, the magnificences, nor yet the superb horses of France, which she had enjoyed so long; but since she must change her paradise for hell, she must needs take patience. And what is worse was that when she went to bed, being lodged on the lower floor of the abbey of Islebourg [Holyrood], which is certainly a noble building and is not like the country, there came beneath her window some five or six hundred scoundrels of the town, who gave her a serenade

with wretched violins and little rebecks (of which there is no lack in Scotland), to which they chanted psalms so badly sung and so out of tune that nothing could be worse. Ha! what music and what repose for her first night!

The next morning they would have killed her chaplain in front of her lodging; had he not escaped quickly into her chamber he was dead; they would have done to him as they did later to her secretary David [Riccio] whom, because he was clever, the queen liked for the management of her affairs; but they killed him in her room, so close to her that the blood spurted upon her gown and he fell dead at her feet. What an indignity! But they did many other indignities to her; therefore must we not be astonished if they spoke ill of her. On this attempt being made against her chaplain she became so sad and vexed that she said: "This is a fine beginning of obedience and welcome from my subjects! I know not what may be the end, but I foresee it will be bad." Thus the poor princess showed herself a second Cassandra in prophecy as she was in beauty.

Being now there, she lived about three years very discreetly in her widowhood, and would have continued to do so, but the Parliament of her kingdom begged her and entreated her to marry, in order that she might leave them a fine king conceived by her, like him of the present day [James I]. There are some who say that, during the first wars, the King of Navarre desired to marry her, repudiating the queen his wife, on account of the Religion; but to this she would not consent, saying she had a soul, and would not lose it for all the grandeurs of the world, — making great scruple of espousing a married man.

At last she wedded a young English lord, of a great house, but not her equal [Henry Darnley, Earl of Lennox, her cousin]. The marriage was not happy for either the one or

the other. I shall not here relate how the king her husband, having made her a very fine child, who reigns to-day, died, being killed by a *fougade* [small mine] exploded where he lodged. The history of that is written and printed, but not with truth as to the accusations raised against the queen of consenting to the deed. They are lies and insults; for never was that queen cruel; she was always kind and very gentle. Never in France did she any cruelty, nor would she take pleasure or have the heart to see poor criminals put to death by justice, like many grandees whom I have known; and when she was in her galley never would she allow a single convict to be beaten, were it ever so little; she begged her uncle, the grand-prior, as to this, and commanded it to the overseer herself, having great compassion for their misery, so that her heart was sick for it.

To end this topic, never did cruelty lodge in the heart of such great and tender beauty; they are liars who have said and written it; among others M. Buchanan,[1] who ill returned the kindnesses the queen had done him both in France and Scotland in saving his life and relieving him from banishment. It would have been better had he employed his most excellent knowledge in speaking better of her, and not about the amours of Bothwell; even to transcribing sonnets she had made, which those who knew her poesy and her learning have always said were never written by her; nor did they judge less falsely that amour, for Bothwell was a most ugly man, with as bad a grace as could be seen.

But if this one [Buchanan] said no good, others have written a noble book upon her innocence, which I have seen, and which declared and proved it so that the poorest minds took hold of it and even her enemies paid heed; but

[1] George Buchanan, historian and Scotch poet, who wrote libels and calumnies against Marie Stuart in prison. (French editor.)

they, wishing to ruin her, as they did in the end, were obstinate, and never ceased to persecute her until she was put into a strong castle, which they say is that of Saint-Andrew in Scotland. There, having lived nearly one year miserably captive, she was delivered by means of a most honourable and brave gentleman of that land and of good family, named M. de Beton, whom I knew and saw, and who related to me the whole story, as we were crossing the river before the Louvre, when he came to bring the news to the king. He was nephew to the Bishop of Glasco, ambassador to France, one of the most worthy men and prelates ever known, and who remained a faithful servant to his mistress to her last breath, and is so still, after her death.

So then, the queen, being at liberty, did not stay idle; in less than no time she gathered an army of those whom she thought her most faithful adherents, leading it herself, — at its head, mounted on a good horse, dressed in a simple petticoat of white taffetas, with a coif of crêpe on her head; at which I have seen many persons wonder, even the queen-mother, that so tender a princess, and so dainty as she was and had been all her life, should accustom herself at once to the hardships of war. But what would one not endure to reign absolutely and revenge one's self upon a rebellious people, and reduce it to obedience?

Behold this queen, therefore, beautiful and generous, like a second Zenobia, at the head of her army, leading it on to face that of her enemies and to give battle. But alas! what misfortune! Just as she thought her side would engage the others, just as she was animating and exhorting them with her noble and valorous words, which might have moved the rocks, they raised their lances without fighting, and, first on one side and then upon another, threw down their arms, embraced, and were friends; and all, confederated and sworn

together, plotted to seize the queen, and make her prisoner and take her to England. M. Coste, the steward of her household, a gentleman of Auvergne, related this to the queen-mother, having come from there, and met her at Saint-Maur, where he told it also to many of us.

After this she was taken to England, where she was lodged in a castle and so closely confined in captivity that she never left it for eighteen or twenty years until her death; to which she was sentenced too cruelly for the reasons, such as they were, that were given on her trial; but the principal, as I hold on good authority, was that the Queen of England never liked her, but was always and for a long time jealous of her beauty, which far surpassed her own. That is what jealousy is! — and for religion too! So it was that this princess, after her long imprisonment, was condemned to death and to have her head cut off; this judgment was pronounced upon her two months before she was executed. Some say that she knew nothing of it until they went to execute her. Others declare that it was told to her two months earlier, as the queen-mother, who was greatly distressed, was informed at Coignac, where she then was; and she was even told of this particular: no sooner was the judgment pronounced than Queen Marie's chamber and bed were hung with black. The queen-mother thereon praised the firmness of the Queen of Scotland and said she had never seen or heard tell of any queen more steadfast in adversity. I was present when she said this, but I never thought the Queen of England would let her die, — not esteeming her so cruel as all that. Of her own nature she was not (though she was in this). I also thought that M. de Bellièvre, whom the king despatched to save her life, would have worked out something good; nevertheless, he gained nothing.

But to come to this pitiful death, which no one can describe without great compassion. On the seventeenth of February of the year one thousand five hundred and eighty-seven, there came to the place where the queen was prisoner, a castle called Fodringhaye, the commissioners of the Queen of England, sent by her (I shall not give their names, as it would serve no end) about two or three o'clock in the afternoon; and in presence of Paulet, her guardian or jailer, read aloud their commission to the prisoner touching her execution, declaring to her that the next morning they should proceed to it, and admonishing her to be ready between seven and eight o'clock.

She, without in any way being surprised, thanked them for their good news, saying that nothing could be better for her than to come to the end of her misery; and that for long, ever since her detention in England, she had resolved and prepared herself to die; entreating, nevertheless, the commissioners to grant her a little time and leisure to make her will and put her affairs in order, — inasmuch as all depended upon their will, as their commission said. To which the Comte de Cherusbery [Earl of Shrewsbury] replied rather roughly: "No, no, madame, you must die. Hold yourself ready between seven and eight to-morrow morning. We shall not prolong the delay by a moment." There was one, more courteous it seemed to her, who wished to use some demonstrations that might give her more firmness to endure such death. She answered him that she had no need of consolation, at least not as coming from him; but that if he wished to do a good office to her conscience he would send for her almoner to confess her; which would be an obligation that surpassed all others. As for her body, she said she did not think they would be so inhuman as to deny her the right of sepulture. To this he replied that

she must not expect it; so that she was forced to write her confession, which was as follows:—

"I have to-day been combated for my religion and to make me receive the consolation of heretics. You will hear from Bourgoing and others that I have faithfully made protestation of my faith, in which I choose to die. I requested to have you here, to make my confession and to receive my sacrament; this has been cruelly refused to me, also the removal of my body, and the power to freely make my will, or to write aught, except through their hands. In default of that, I confess the grievousness of my sins in general, as I had expected to make to you in particulars; entreating you, in God's name, to watch and pray with me this night for the forgiveness of my sins, and to send me absolution and pardon for all the offences which I have committed. I shall endeavour to see you in their presence, as they have granted me; and if it is permitted I shall ask pardon of you before them all. Advise me of the proper prayers to use this night and to-morrow morning, for the time is short and I have no leisure to write; I shall recommend you like the rest, and especially that your benefices may be preserved and secured to you, and I shall commend you to the king. I have no more leisure; advise me in writing of all you think good for my salvation."

That done, and having thus provided for the salvation of her soul before all things else, she lost no time, though little remained to her (yet long enough to have shaken the firmest constancy, but in her they saw no fear of death, only much content to leave these earthly miseries), in writing to our king, to the queen-mother, whom she honoured much, to Monsieur and Madame de Guise, and other private persons, letters truly very piteous, but all aiming to let them know that to her latest hour she had not lost memory of

friends; and also the contentment she received in seeing herself delivered from so many woes by which for one and twenty years she had been crushed; also she sent presents to all, of a value and price in keeping with a poor, unfortunate, and captive queen.

After this, she summoned her household, from the highest to the lowest, and opened her coffers to see how much money remained to her; this she divided to each according to the service she had had from them; and to her women she gave what remained to her of rings, arrows, headgear, and accoutrements; telling them that it was with much regret she had no more with which to reward them, but assuring them that her son would make up for her deficiency; and she begged her *maître d'hôtel* to say this to her said son; to whom she sent her blessing, praying him not to avenge her death, leaving all to God to order according to His holy will. Then she bade them farewell without a tear; on the contrary she consoled them, saying they must not weep to see her on the point of blessedness in exchange for all the sorrows she had had. After which she sent them from her chamber, except her women.

It now being night, she retired to her oratory, where she prayed to God two hours on her bare knees upon the ground, for her women saw them; then she returned to her room and said to them: "I think it would be best, my friends, if I ate something and went to bed, so that to-morrow I may do nothing unworthy of me, and that my heart may not fail me." What generosity and what courage! She did as she said; and taking only some toast with wine she went to bed, where she slept little, but spent the night chiefly in prayers and orisons.

She rose about two hours before dawn and dressed herself as properly as she could, and better than usual; taking

a gown of black velvet, which she had reserved from her other accoutrements, saying to her women: "My friends, I would rather have left you this attire than that of yesterday, but I think I ought to go to death a little honourably and have upon me something more than common. Here is a handkerchief, which I also reserved, to bind my eyes when I go there; I give it to you, *ma mie* (speaking to one of her women), for I wish to receive that last office from you."

After this, she retired to her oratory, having bid them adieu once more and kissed them, — giving them many particulars to tell the king, the queen, and her relations; not things that tended to vengeance, but the contrary. Then she took the sacrament by means of a consecrated wafer which the good Pope Pius V. had sent her to serve in some emergency, the which she had always most sacredly preserved and guarded.

Having said her prayers, which were very long, it now being fully morning she returned to her chamber, and sat beside the fire; still talking to her women and comforting them, instead of their comforting her; she said that the joys of the world were nothing; that she ought to serve as a warning to the greatest of the earth as well as to the smallest, for she, having been queen of the kingdoms of France and Scotland, one by nature, the other by fortune, after triumphing in the midst of all honours and grandeurs, was reduced to the hands of an executioner; innocent, however, which consoled her. She told them their best pattern was that she died in the Catholic religion, holy and good, which she would never abandon to her latest breath, having been baptized therein; and that she wanted no fame after her death, except that they would publish her firmness throughout all France when they returned there, as she begged of them; and further, though she knew they would

have much heart-break to see her on the scaffold performing this tragedy, yet she wished them to witness her death; knowing well that none would be so faithful in making the report of what was now to happen.

As she ended these words some one knocked roughly on the door. Her women, knowing it was the hour they were coming to fetch her, wanted to make resistance; but she said to them: "My friends, it will do no good; open the door."

First there entered a man with a white stick in his hand, who, without addressing any one, said twice over as he advanced: "I have come — I have come." The queen, not doubting that he announced to her the moment of execution, took a little ivory cross in her hand.

Next came the above-named commissioners; and when they had entered, the queen said to them: "Well, messieurs, you have come to fetch me. I am ready and well resolved to die; and I think the queen, my good sister, does much for me; and you likewise who are seeking me. Let us go." They, seeing such firmness accompanied by so extreme a beauty and great gentleness, were much astonished, for never had she seemed more beautiful, having a colour in her cheeks which embellished her.

Thus Boccaccio wrote of Sophonisba in her adversity, after the taking of her husband and the town, speaking to Massinissa: "You would have said," he relates, "that her misfortune made her more beauteous; it assisted the sweetness of her face and made it more agreeable and desirable."

The commissioners were greatly moved to some compassion. Still, as she left the room they would not let her women follow her, fearing that by their lamentations, sighs, and outcries they would disturb the execution. But the queen said to them: "What, gentlemen! would you treat me with such rigour as not to allow my women to accom-

pany me to death? Grant me at least this favour." Which they did, on her pledging her word she would impose silence upon them when the time came to admit them.

The place of execution was in the hall, where they had raised a broad scaffold, about twelve feet square and two high, covered with a shabby black cloth.

She entered this hall without any change of countenance but with majesty and grace, as though she were entering a ballroom, where in other days she had so excellently shone.

As she neared the scaffold she called to her *maître d'hôtel* and said, "Help me to mount; it is the last service I shall receive from you;" and she repeated to him what she had already told him in her chamber he was to tell her son. Then, being on the scaffold, she asked for her almoner, begging the officers who were there to permit him to come to her, which they flatly refused, — the Earl of Kent saying to her that he pitied her greatly for thus clinging to superstitions of a past age, and that she ought to bear the cross of Christ in her heart and not in her hand. To which she made answer that it was difficult to bear so beautiful an image in the hand without the heart being touched by emotion and memory; and that the most becoming thing in a Christian person was to carry a real sign of the redemption to the death before her. Then, seeing that she could not have her almoner, she asked that her women might come as they had promised her; which was done. One of them, on entering the hall, seeing her mistress on the scaffold among her executioners, could not keep from crying out and moaning and losing her control; but the queen instantly laying her finger on her lips, she restrained herself.

Her Majesty then began to make her protestations, namely: that never had she plotted against the State, nor against the life of the queen, her good sister, — except in trying to regain

her liberty, as all captives may. But she saw plainly that the cause of her death was religion, and she esteemed herself very happy to finish her life for that cause. She begged the queen, her good sister, to have pity upon her poor servants whom she held captive, because of the affection they had shown in seeking the liberty of their mistress, inasmuch as she was now to die for all.

They then brought to her a minister to exhort her [the Dean of Peterborough], but she said to him in English, "Ah! my friend, give yourself patience;" declaring that she would not hold converse with him nor hear any talk of his sect, for she had prepared herself to die without counsel, and that persons like him could not give her consolation or contentment of mind.

Notwithstanding this, seeing that he continued his prayers in his jargon, she never ceased to say her own in Latin, raising her voice above that of the minister. After which she said again that she esteemed herself very happy to shed the last drop of her blood for her religion, rather than live longer and wait till nature had completed the full course of her life; and that she hoped in Him whose cross she held in her hand, before whose feet she was prostrate, that this temporal death, borne for Him, would be for her the passage, the entrance to, and the beginning of life eternal with the angels and the blessèd, who would receive her blood and present it before God, in abolition of her sins; and them she prayed to be her intercessors for the obtaining of pardon and mercy.

Such were her prayers, being on her knees on the scaffold, which she made with a fervent heart; adding others for the pope, the kings of France, and even for the Queen of England, praying God to illuminate her with his Holy Spirit; praying also for her son and for the islands of Britain and Scotland that they might be converted.

That done, she called her women to help her to remove her black veil, her headdress, and other ornaments; and as the executioner tried to touch her she said, "Ah! my friend, do not touch me!" But she could not prevent his doing so, for after they had lowered her robe to the waist, that villain pulled her roughly by the arm and took off her doublet [*pourpoint*] and the body of her petticoat [*corps de cotte*] with its low collar, so that her neck and her beautiful bosom, more white than alabaster, were bare and uncovered.

She arranged herself as quickly as she could, saying she was not accustomed to strip before others, especially so large a company (it is said there were four or five hundred persons present), nor to employ the services of such a valet.

The executioner then knelt down and asked her pardon; on which she said that she pardoned him, and all who were the authors of her death with as much good-will as she prayed that God would show in forgiving her sins.

Then she told her woman to whom she had given the handkerchief to bring it to her.

She wore a cross of gold, in which was a piece of the true cross, with the image of Our Saviour upon it; this she wished to give to one of her ladies, but the executioner prevented her, although Her Majesty begged him, saying that the lady would pay him three times its value.

Then, all being ready, she kissed her ladies, and bade them retire with her benediction, making the sign of the cross upon them. And seeing that one of them could not restrain her sobs she imposed silence, saying she was bound by a promise that they would cause no trouble by their tears and moans; and she commanded them to withdraw quietly, and pray to God for her, and bear faithful testimony to her death in the ancient and sacred Catholic religion.

One of the women having bandaged her eyes with the

handkerchief, she threw herself instantly on her knees with great courage and without the slightest demonstration or sign that she feared death.

Her firmness was such that all present, even her enemies, were moved; there were not four persons present who could keep from weeping; they thought the sight amazing, and condemned themselves in their consciences for such injustice.

And because the minister of Satan importuned her, trying to kill her soul as well as her body, and troubling her prayers, she raised her voice to surmount his, and said in Latin the psalm: *In te, Domine, speravi; non confundar in æternum;* which she recited throughout. Having ended it, she laid her head upon the block, and, as she repeated once more the words, *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum,* the executioner struck her a strong blow with the axe, that drove her headgear into her head, which did not fall until the third blow, — to make her martyrdom the greater and more glorious, though it is not the pain but the cause that makes the martyr.

This done, he took the head in his hand, and showing it to all present said: "God save the queen, Elizabeth! Thus perish the enemies of the gospel!" So saying, he uncoifed her in derision to show her hair, now white; which, however, she had never shrunk from showing, twisting and curling it as when her hair was beautiful, so fair and golden; for it was not age had changed it at thirty-five years old (being now but forty); it was the griefs, the woes, the sadness she had borne in her kingdom and in her prison.

This hapless tragedy ended, her poor ladies, anxious for the honour of their mistress, addressed themselves to Paulet, her jailer, begging him that the executioner should not touch the body, but that they might be allowed to disrobe it after all the spectators had withdrawn, so that no indignity might

be done to it, promising to return all the clothing, and whatever else he might ask or claim; but that cursèd man sent them roughly away and ordered them to leave the hall.

Then the executioner unclothed her and handled her at his discretion, and when he had done what he wished the body was carried to a chamber adjoining that of her serving-men, and carefully locked in, for fear they should enter and endeavour to perform any good and pious office. And to their grief and distress was added this: that they could see her through a hole, half covered by a piece of green drugget torn from her billiard table. What brutal indifference! What animosity and indignity! — not even to have bought her a black cloth a little more worthy of her!

The poor body was left there long in that state until it began to corrupt so that they were forced to salt and embalm it, — but slightly, to save cost; after which they put it in a leaden coffin, where it was kept for seven months and then carried to profane ground around the temple of Petersbrouch [Peterborough Cathedral]. True it is that this church is dedicated to the name of Saint Peter, and that Queen Catherine of Spain is buried there as a Catholic; but the place is now profane, as are all the churches in England in these days.

There are some who have said and written, even the English who have made a book on this death and its causes, that the spoils of the late queen were taken from the executioner by paying him the value in money of her clothes and her royal ornaments. The cloth with which the scaffold was covered, even the boards of it were partly burned and partly washed, for fear that in times to come they might serve superstition; that is to say, for fear that any careful Catholic might some day buy and preserve them with respect, honour, and reverence (a fear which may possibly serve as a prophecy and augury), as the ancient Fathers had a practice of keep-

ing relics and of taking care with devotion of the monuments of martyrs. In these days heretics do nothing of the kind. *Quia omnia quæ martyrum erant, cremabant,* as Eusebius says, *et cineres in Rhodanum spargebant, ut cum corporibus interiret eorum quoque memoria.* Nevertheless, the memory of this queen, in spite of all things, will live forever in glory and in triumph.

Here, then, is the tale of her death, which I hold from the report of two damoiselles there present, very honourable certainly, very faithful to their mistress, and obedient to her commands in thus bearing testimony to her firmness and to her religion. They returned to France after losing her, for they were French; one was a daughter of Mme. de Raré, whom I knew in France as one of the ladies of the late queen. I think that these two honourable damoiselles would have caused the most barbarous of men to weep at hearing so piteous a tale; which they made the more lamentable by tears, and by their tender, doleful, and noble language.

I also learned much from a book which has been published, entitled "The Martyrdom of the Queen of Scotland, Dowager of France." Alas! that being our queen did her no service. It seems to me that being such they ought to have feared our vengeance for putting her to death; and they would have thought a hundred times before they came to it, if our king had chosen to take the initiative. But, because he hated the Messieurs de Guise, his cousins, he took no pains except as formal duty. Alas! what could that poor innocent do? This is what many asked.

Others say that he made many formal appeals. It is true that he sent to the Queen of England M. de Bellièvre, one of the greatest and wisest senators of France and the ablest, who did not fail to offer all his arguments, with the king's

prayers and threats, and do all else that he could; and among other things he declared that it did not belong to one king or sovereign to put to death another king or sovereign, over whom he had no power either from God or man.

I have never known a generous person who did not say that the Queen of England would have won immortal glory had she used mercy to the Scottish queen; and also she would be exempt from the risk of vengeance, however tardy, which awaits her for the shedding of innocent blood that cries aloud for it. It is said that the English queen was well advised of this; but not only did she pass over the advice of many of her kingdom, but also that of many great Protestant princes and lords both in France and Germany, — such as the Prince de Condé and Casimir, since dead, and the Prince of Orange and others, who had subscribed to this violent death while not expecting it, but afterwards felt their conscience burdened, inasmuch as it did not concern them and brought them no advantage, and they did it only to please the queen; but, in truth, it did them inestimable detriment.

They say, too, that Queen Elizabeth, when she sent to notify that poor Queen Marie of this melancholy sentence, assured her that it was done with great and sad regret on her part, under constraint of Parliament which urged it on her. To which Queen Marie answered: "She has much more power than that to make them obedient to her will when it pleases her; for she is the princess, or more truly the prince, who has made herself the most feared and reverenced."

Now, I rely on the truth of all things, which time will reveal. Queen Marie will live glorious in this world and in the other; and the time will come in a few years when some

good pope will canonize her in memory of the martyrdom she suffered for the honour of God and of his Law.

It is not to be doubted that if that great, valiant, and generous prince, the late M. de Guise, the last [Henri, le Balafré, assassinated at Blois], was not dead, vengeance for so noble a queen and cousin thus murdered would not still be unborn. I have said enough on so pitiful a subject, which I end thus: —

This queen, of a beauty so incomparable,
Was, with too great injustice, put to death:
To sustain that heart of faith inviolable
Can it be there are none to avenge the wrong?

One there is who has written her epitaph in Latin verses, the substance of which is as follows: "Nature had produced this queen to be seen of all the world: with great admiration was she seen for her beauty and virtues so long as she lived: but England, envious, placed her on a scaffold to be seen in derision: yet was well deceived; for the sight turned praise and admiration to her, and glory and thanksgiving to God."

I must, before I finish, say a word here in reply to those whom I have heard speak ill of her for the death of Chastellard, whom the queen condemned to death in Scotland, — laying upon her that she had justly suffered for making others suffer. Upon that count there is no justice, and it should never have been made. Those who know the history will never blame our queen; and, for that reason, I shall here relate it for her justification.

Chastellard was a gentleman of Dauphiné, of good family and condition, for he was great-nephew on his mother's side of that brave M. de Bayard, whom they say he resembled in figure, which in him was medium, very beautiful and slender,

as they say M. de Bayard had also. He was very adroit at arms, and inclined in all ways to honourable exercises, such as firing at a mark, playing at tennis, leaping, and dancing. In short, he was a most accomplished gentleman; and as for his soul, it was also very noble; he spoke well, and wrote of the best, even in rhyme, as well as any gentleman in France, using a most sweet and lovely poesy, like a knight.

He followed M. d'Amville, so-called then, now M. le Connétable; but when we were with M. le Grand Prieur, of the house of Lorraine, who conducted the queen [to Scotland] the said Chastellard was with us, and, in this company became known to the queen for his charming actions, above all for his rhymes; among which he made some to please her in translation from Italian (which he spoke and knew well), beginning, *Che giova posseder città e regni;* which is a very well made sonnet, the substance of which is as follows: "What serves her to possess so many kingdoms, cities, towns, and provinces, to command so many peoples, and be respected, feared, admired of all, if still to sleep a widow, lone and cold as ice?"

He made also other rhymes, most beautiful, which I have seen written by his hand, for they never were imprinted, that I know.

The queen, therefore, who loved letters, and principally poems, for sometimes she made dainty ones herself, was pleased in seeing those of Chastellard, and even made response, and, for that reason, gave him good cheer and entertained him often. But he, in secrecy, was kindled by a flame too high, the which its object could not hinder, for who can shield herself from love? In times gone by the most chaste goddesses and dames were loved, and still are loved; indeed we love their marble statues; but for that

no lady has been blamed unless she yielded to it. Therefore, kindle who will these sacred fires!

Chastellard returned with all our troop to France, much grieved and desperate in leaving so beautiful an object of his love. After one year the civil war broke out in France. He, who belonged to the Religion [Protestant], struggled within himself which side to take, whether to go to Orléans with the others, or stay with M. d'Amville, and make war against his faith. On the one hand, it seemed to him too bitter to go against his conscience; on the other, to take up arms against his master displeased him hugely; wherefore he resolved to fight for neither the one nor yet the other, but to banish himself and go to Scotland, let fight who would, and pass the time away. He opened this project to M. d'Amville and told him his resolution, begging him to write letters in his favour to the queen; which he obtained: then, taking leave of one and all, he went; I saw him go; he bade me adieu and told me in part his resolution, we being friends.

He made his voyage, which ended happily, so that, having arrived in Scotland and discoursing of his intentions to the queen, she received him kindly and assured him he was welcome. But he, abusing such good cheer and seeking to attack the sun, perished like Phaëton; for, driven by love and passion, he was presumptuous enough to hide beneath the bed of her Majesty, where he was discovered when she retired. The queen, not wishing to make a scandal, pardoned him; availing herself of that good counsel which the lady of honour gives to her mistress in the "Novels of the Queen of Navarre," when a seigneur of her brother's Court, slipping through a trap-door made by him in the alcove, seeking to win her, brought nothing back but shame and scratches: she wishing to punish his temerity and complain

of him to her brother, the lady of honour counselled her that, since the seigneur had won nought but shame and scratches, it was for her honour as a lady of such mark not to be talked of; for the more it was contended over, the more it would go to the nose of the world and the mouth of gossips.

Our Queen of Scotland, being wise and prudent, passed this scandal by; but the said Chastellard, not content and more than ever mad with love, returned for the second time, forgetting both his former crime and pardon. Then the queen, for her honour, and not to give occasion to her women to think evil, and also to her people if it were known, lost patience and gave him up to justice, which condemned him quickly to be beheaded, in view of the crime of such an act. The day having come, before he died he had in his hand the hymns of M. de Ronsard; and, for his eternal consolation, he read from end to end the Hymn of Death (which is well done, and proper not to make death abhorrent), taking no help of other spiritual book, nor of minister or confessor.

Having ended that reading wholly, he turned to the spot where he thought the queen must be, and cried in a loud voice: "Adieu, most beautiful, most cruel princess in all the world!" then, firmly stretching his neck to the executioner, he let himself be killed very easily.

Some have wished to discuss why it was that he called her cruel; whether because she had no pity on his love, or on his life. But what should she have done? If, after her first pardon she had granted him a second, she would on all sides have been slandered; to save her honour it was needful that the law should take its course. That is the end of this history.


MARIA STVART SCO:
ET GAL REGINA

"Well, they may say what they will, many a true heart will be sad for Mary Stuart, e'en if all be true men say of her." That speech, which Walter Scott puts into the mouth of one of the personages in his novel of "The Abbot" at the moment when he is preparing the reader for an introduction to the beautiful queen, remains the last word of posterity as it was of contemporaries, — the conclusion of history as of poesy.

Elizabeth living triumphed, and her policy after her lives and triumphs still, so that Protestantism and the British empire are one and the same thing. Marie Stuart succumbed, in her person and in that of her descendants; Charles I. under the axe, James II. in exile, each continued and added to his heritage of faults, imprudences, and calamities; the whole race of the Stuarts was cut off, and seems to have deserved it. But, vanquished in the order of things and under the empire of fact, and even under that of inexorable reason, the beautiful queen has regained all in the world of imagination and of pity. She has found, from century to century, knights, lovers, and avengers. A few years ago, a Russian of distinction, Prince Alexander Labanoff, began, with incomparable zeal, a search through the archives, the collections, the libraries of Europe, for documents emanating directly from Marie Stuart, the most insignificant as well as the most important of her letters, in order to connect them and so make a nucleus of history, and also an authentic shrine, not doubting that interest, serious and tender interest, would rise, more powerful still, from the bosom of truth itself. On the appearance of this collection of Prince Labanoff, M. Mignet produced, from 1847 to 1850, a series of articles in the "Journal des Savants," in which, not content with appreciating the prince's documents, he presented from himself new documents, hitherto

unpublished and affording new lights. Since then, leaving the form of criticism and dissertation, M. Mignard has taken this fine subject as a whole, and has written a complete narrative upon it, grave, compact, interesting, and definitive, which he is now publishing [1851].

In the meantime, about a year ago, there appeared a "History of Marie Stuart" by M. Dargaud, a writer of talent, whose book has been much praised and much read. M. Dargaud made, in his own way, various researches about the heroine of his choice; he went expressly to England and Scotland, and visited as a pilgrim all the places and scenes of Marie Stuart's sojourns and captivities. While drawing abundantly from preceding writers, M. Dargaud does them justice with effusion and cordiality; he sheds through every line of his history the sentiment of exalted pity and poesy inspired within him by the memory of that royal and Catholic victim; he deserves the fine letter which Mme. Sand wrote him from Nohant, April 10, 1851, in which she congratulates him, almost without criticism, and speaks of Marie Stuart with charm and eloquence. If I do not dwell at greater length upon the work of M. Dargaud, it is, I must avow, because I am not of that too emotional school which softens and enervates history. I think that history should not necessarily be dull and wearisome, but still less do I think it should be impassioned, sentimental, and as if magnetic. Without wishing to depreciate the qualities of M. Dargaud, which are too much in the taste of the day not to be their own recommendation, I shall follow in preference a more severe historian, whose judgment and whose method of procedure inspire me with confidence.

Marie Stuart, born December 8, 1542, six days before the death of her father, who was then combating, like all the kings his predecessors, a turbulent nobility, began as an

orphan her fickle and unfortunate destiny. Storms assailed her in her cradle, —

> "As if, e'en then, inhuman Fortune
> Would suckle me with sadness and with pain,"

as an old poet, in I know not what tragedy, has made her say. Crowned at the age of nine months, disputed already in marriage between the French and English parties, each desiring to prevail in Scotland, she was early, through the influence of her mother, Marie de Guise (sister of the illustrious Guises), bestowed upon the Dauphin of France, the son of King Henri II. August 13, 1548, Marie Stuart, then rather less than six years old, landed at Brest. Betrothed to the young dauphin, who, on his father's death became François II., she was brought up among the children of Henri II. and Catherine de' Medici, and remained in France, first as dauphine, then as queen, until the premature death of her husband. She lived there in every respect as a French princess. These twelve or thirteen years in France were her joy and her charm, and the source of her ruin.

She grew up in the bosom of the most polished, most learned, most gallant Court of those times, shining there in her early bloom like a rare and most admired marvel, knowing music and all the arts (*divinæ Palladis artes*), learning the languages of antiquity, speaking themes in Latin, superior in French rhetoric, enjoying an intercourse with poets, and being herself their rival with her poems. Scotland, during all this time, seemed to her a barbaric and savage land, which she earnestly hoped never to see again, or, at any rate, never to inhabit. Trained to a policy wholly of the Court and wholly personal, they made her sign at Fontainebleau at the time of her marriage (1558) a secret deed of gift of the kingdom of Scotland to the kings of France, at the same time that she publicly gave adherence to the

conditions which the commissioners from Scotland had attached to the marriage, conditions under which she pledged herself to maintain the integrity, the laws, and the liberties of her native land. It was at this very moment that she secretly made gift to the kings of France of her whole kingdom by an act of her own good-will and power. The Court of France prompted her to that imprudent treachery at the age of sixteen. Another very impolitic imprudence, which proclaimed itself more openly, was committed when Henri II., on the death of Mary Tudor, made Marie Stuart, the dauphine, bear the arms of England beside those of Scotland, thus presenting her thenceforth as a declared rival and competitor of Elizabeth.

When Marie Stuart suddenly lost her husband (December 5, 1560), and it was decided that she, a widow at eighteen, should, instead of remaining in her dowry of Touraine, return to her kingdom of Scotland to bring order to the civil troubles there existing, universal mourning took place in the world of young French seigneurs, noble ladies, and poets. The latter consigned their regrets to many poems which picture Marie Stuart to the life in this decisive hour, the first really sorrowful hour she had ever known. We see her refined, gracious, of a delicate, fair complexion, the form and bust of queen or goddess,—L'Hôpital himself had said of her, after his fashion, in a grave epithalamium:—

> "Adspectu veneranda, putes ut Numen inesse:
> Tantus in ore decor, majestas regia tanta est!"—

of a long hand, elegant and slender (*gracilis*), an alabaster forehead dazzling beneath the crape, and with golden hair—which needs a brief remark. It is a poet (Ronsard) who speaks of "the gold of her ringed and braided hair," and poets, as we know, employ their words a little vaguely. Mme. Sand, speaking of a portrait she had seen as a child

in the English Convent, says, without hesitation, "Marie was beautiful, but red-haired." M. Dargaud speaks of another portrait, "in which a sunray lightens," he says rather oddly, "the curls of her living and electric hair." But Walter Scott, reputed the most correct of historical romance-writers, in describing Marie Stuart a prisoner in Lochleven Castle, shows us, as though he had seen them, her thick tresses of "dark brown," which escaped now and then from her coif. Here we are far from the red or golden tints, and I see no other way of conciliating these differences than to rest on "that hair so beautiful, so blond and fair" [*si blonds et cendrés*] which Brantôme, an ocular witness, admired, — hair that captivity whitened, leaving the poor queen of forty-six "quite bald" in the hands of her executioner, as l'Estoile relates. But at nineteen, the moment of her departure from France, the young widow was in all the glory of her beauty, except for a brilliancy of colour, which she lost at the death of her first husband, giving place to a purer whiteness.

Withal a lively, graceful, and sportive mind, and French raillery, an ardent soul, capable of passion, open to desire, a heart which knew not how to draw back when flame or fancy or enchantment stirred it. Such was the queen, adventurous and poetical, who tore herself from France in tears, sent by politic uncles to recover her authority amid the roughest and most savage of "Frondes."

Scotland, since Marie Stuart left it as a child, had undergone great changes; the principal was the Reformed religion which had taken root there and extended itself vigorously. The great reformer Knox preached the new doctrine, which found in Scotland stern, energetic souls ready made to receive it. The old struggle of the lords and barons against the kings was complicated and redoubled now by that of cities and people against the brilliant beliefs of the Court and the

Catholic hierarchy. The birth of modern society, of civil equality, of respect for the rights of all was painfully working itself out through barbaric scenes, and by means of fanaticism itself. Alone and without counsel, contending with the lords and the nobility as her ancestors had done, Marie Stuart, quick, impulsive, subject to predilections and to antipathies, was already insufficient for the work; what therefore could it be when she found herself face to face with a religious party, born and growing during recent years, face to face with an argumentative, gloomy party, moral and daring, discussing rationally, Bible in hand, the right of kings, and pushing logic even into prayer? Coming from a literary and artificial Court, there was nothing in her that could comprehend these grand and voiceless movements of the people, either to retard them or turn them to her own profit by adapting herself to them. "She returned," says M. Mignet, "full of regrets and disgust, to the barren mountains and the uncultured inhabitants of Scotland. More lovable than able, very ardent and in no way cautious, she returned with a grace that was out of keeping with her surroundings, a dangerous beauty, a keen but variable intellect, a generous but rash soul, a taste for the arts, a love of adventure, and all the passions of a woman joined to the excessive liberty of a widow."

And to complicate the peril of this precarious situation she had for neighbour in England a rival queen, Elizabeth, whom she had first offended by claiming her title, and next, and no less, by a feminine and proclaimed superiority of beauty and grace, — a rival queen capable, energetic, rigid, and dissimulating, representing the contrary religious opinion, and surrounded by able counsellors, firm, consistent, and committed to the same cause. The seven years that Marie Stuart spent in Scotland after her return from France

(August 19, 1561) to her imprisonment (May 18, 1568) are filled with all the blunders and all the faults that could be committed by a young and thoughtless princess, impulsive, unreflecting, and without shrewdness or ability except in the line of her passion, never in view of a general political purpose. The policy of Mme. de Longueville, during the Fronde, seems to me of the same character.

As to other faults, the moral faults of poor Marie Stuart, they are as well known and demonstrated to-day as faults of that kind can well be. Mme. Sand, always very indulgent, regards as the three black spots upon her life the abandonment of Chastellard, her feigned caresses to the hapless Darnley, and her forgetfulness of Bothwell.

Chastellard, as we know, was a gentleman of Dauphiné, musician and poet, in the train of the servitors and adorers of the queen, who at first was very agreeable to her. Chastellard was one of the troop who escorted Marie Stuart to Scotland, and sometime later, urged by his passion, he returned there. But not knowing how to restrain himself, or to keep, as became him, to poetic passion while waiting to inspire, if he could, a real one, he was twice discovered beneath the bed of the queen; the second time she lost patience and turned him over to the law. Poor Chastellard was beheaded; he died reciting, so they say, a hymn of Ronsard's, and crying aloud: "O cruel Lady!" After so stern an act, to which she was driven in fear of scandal and to put her honour above all attainder and suspicion, Marie Stuart had, it would seem, but one course to pursue, namely: to remain the most severe and most virtuous of princesses.

But her severity for Chastellard, though shown for effect, is merely a peccadillo in comparison with her conduct to Darnley, her second husband. By marrying this young man (July 29, 1565), her vassal, but of the race of the

Stuarts and her own family, Marie escaped the diverse political combinations which were striving to attract her to a second marriage; and it would have been, perhaps, a sensible thing to do, if she had not done it as an act of caprice and passion. But she fell in love with Darnley in a single day, and became disgusted in the next. This tall, weakly youth, timid and conceited by turns, with a heart "soft as wax," had nothing in him which subjugates a woman and makes her respect him. A woman such as Marie Stuart, changeable, ardent, easily swayed, with the sentiment of her weakness and of her impulsiveness, likes to find a master and at moments a tyrant in the man she loves, whereas she soon despises her slave and creature when he is nought but that; she much prefers an arm of iron to an effeminate hand.

Less than six months after her marriage Marie, wholly disgusted, consoled herself with an Italian, David Riccio, a man thirty-two years of age, equally well fitted for business or pleasure, who advised her and served her as secretary, and was gifted with a musical talent well suited to commend him to women in other ways. The feeble Darnley confided his jealousy to the discontented lords and gentlemen, and they, in the interests of their faction, prodded his vengeance and offered to serve it with their sword. Ministers and Presbyterian pastors took part in the affair. The whole was plotted and managed with perfect unanimity as a chastisement of Heaven, and, what is more, by help of deeds and formal agreements which simulated legality. The queen and her favourite, apparently before they had any suspicions, were taken in a net. David Riccio was seized by the conspirators while supping in Marie's cabinet (March 9, 1566), Darnley being present, and from there he was dragged into the next room and stabbed. Marie, at this date, was six

months pregnant by her husband. On that day, outraged in honour and embittered in feeling, she conceived for Darnley a deeper contempt mingled with horror, and swore to avenge herself on the murderers. For this purpose she bided her time, she dissimulated; for the first time in her life she controlled herself and restrained her actions. She became politic — as the nature is of passionate women — only in the interests of her passion and her vengeance.

Here is the gravest and the most irreparable incident of her life. Even after we have fully represented to ourselves what the average morality of the sixteenth century, with all the treachery and atrocities it tolerated, was, we are scarcely prepared for this. Marie Stuart's first desire was to revenge herself on the lords and gentlemen who had lent their daggers to Darnley, rather than on her weak and timid husband. To reach her end she reconciled herself with the latter and detached him from the conspirators, his accomplices. She forced him to disavow them, thus degrading and sinking him in his own estimation. At this point she remained as long as a new passion was not added to her supreme contempt. Meantime her child was born (June 19), and she made Darnley the father of a son who resembled both parents on their worst sides, the future James I. of England, that soul of a casuist in a king. But by this time a new passion was budding in the open heart of Marie Stuart. He whom she now chose had neither Darnley's feebleness nor the salon graces of a Riccio; he was the Earl of Bothwell, a man of thirty, ugly, but martial in aspect, brave, bold, violent, and capable of daring all things. To him it was that this flexible and tender will was henceforth to cling for its support. Marie Stuart has found her master; and him she will obey in all things, without scruple, without remorse, as happens always in distracted passion.

But how rid herself of a husband henceforth odious? How unite herself to the man she loves and whose ambition is not of a kind to stop half way? Here again we need — not to excuse, but to explain Marie Stuart — we need to represent to our minds the morality of that day. A goodly number of the same lords who had taken part in Riccio's murder, and who were leagued together by deeds and documents, offered themselves to the queen, and, for the purpose of recovering favour, let her see the means of getting rid of a husband who was now so irksome. She answered this overture by merely speaking of a divorce and the difficulty of obtaining it. But these men, little scrupulous, said to her plainly, by the mouth of Lethington, the ablest and most politic of them all: "Madame, give yourself no anxiety; we, the leaders of the nobility, and the heads of your Grace's Council, will find a way to deliver you from him without prejudice to your son; and though my Lord Murray, here present (the illegitimate brother of Marie Stuart), is little less scrupulous as a Protestant than your Grace is as a Papist, I feel sure that he will look through his fingers, see us act, and say nothing."

The word was spoken; Marie had only to do as her brother did, "look through her fingers," as the vulgar saying was, and let things go on without taking part in them. She did take a part however; she led into the trap, by a feigned return of tenderness, the unfortunate Darnley, then convalescing from the small-pox. She removed his suspicions without much trouble, and, recovering her empire over him, persuaded him to come in a litter from Glasgow to Kirk-of-Field, at the gates of Edinburgh, where there was a species of parsonage, little suitable for the reception of a king and queen, but very convenient for the crime now to be committed.

There Darnley perished, strangled with his page, during

the night of February 9, 1567. The house was blown up by means of a barrel of gunpowder, placed there to give the idea of an accident. During this time Marie had gone to a masked ball at Holyrood, not having quitted her husband until that evening, when all was prepared to its slightest detail. Bothwell, who was present for a time at the ball, left Edinburgh after midnight and presided at the killing. These circumstances are proved in an irrefragable manner by the testimony of witnesses, by the confessions of the actors, and by the letters of Marie Stuart, the authenticity of which M. Mignard, with decisive clearness, places beyond all doubt. She felt that in giving herself thus to Bothwell's projects she furnished him with weapons against herself and gave him grounds to distrust her in turn. He might say to himself, as the Duke of Norfolk said later, that "the pillow of such a woman was too hard" to sleep upon. During the preparation of this horrible trap she more than once showed her repugnance to deceive the poor sick dupe who trusted her. "I shall never rejoice," she writes, "through deceiving him who trusts me. Nevertheless, command me in all things. But do not conceive an ill opinion of me; because you yourself are the cause of this; for I would never do anything against him for my own particular vengeance." And truly this rôle of Clytemnestra, or of Gertrude in Hamlet was not in accordance with her nature, and could only have been imposed upon her. But passion rendered her for this once insensible to pity, and made her heart (she herself avows it) "as hard as diamond." Marie Stuart soon put the climax to her ill-regulated passion and desires by marrying Bothwell; thus revolting the mind of her whole people, whose morality, fanatical as it was, was never in the least depraved, and was far more upright than that of the nobles.

The crime was echoed beyond the seas. L'Hôpital, that

representative of the human conscience in a dreadful era, heard, in his country retreat, of the misguided conduct of her whose early grace and first marriage he had celebrated in his stately epithalamium; and he now recorded his indignation in another Latin poem, wherein he recounts the horrors of that funereal night, and does not shrink from calling the wife and the young mother "the murderess, alas! of a father whose child was still at her breast."

On the 15th of May, three months — only three months after the murder, at the first smile of spring, the marriage with the murderer was celebrated. Marie Stuart justified in all ways Shakespeare's saying: "Frailty, thy name is Woman." For none was ever more a woman than Marie Stuart.

Here I am unable to admit the third reproach of Mme. Sand, that of Marie Stuart's forgetfulness of Bothwell. I see, on the contrary, through all the obstacles, all the perils immediately following this marriage, that Marie had no other idea than that of avoiding separation from her violent and domineering husband. She loved him so madly that she said to whosoever might hear her (April, 1567) that "she would quit France, England, and her own country, and follow him to the ends of the earth in nought but a white petticoat, rather than be parted from him." And soon after, forced by the lords to tear herself from Bothwell, she reproaches them bitterly, asking but one thing, "that both be put in a vessel and sent away where Fortune led them." It was only enforced separation, final imprisonment, and the impossibility of communication, which compelled the rupture. It is true that Marie, a prisoner in England, solicited the Parliament of Scotland to annul her marriage with Bothwell, in the hope she then had of marrying the Duke of Norfolk, who played the lover to herself and crown, though she never saw him.

But, Bothwell being a fugitive and ruined, can we reproach Marie Stuart for a project from which she hoped for restoration and deliverance? Her passion for Bothwell had been a delirium, which drove her into connivance with crime. That fever calmed, Marie Stuart turned her mind to the resources which presented themselves, among which was the offer of her hand. Her wrong-doing does not lie there; amid so many infidelities and horrors, it would be pushing delicacy much too far to require eternity of sentiment for the remains of an unbridled and bloody passion. That which is due to such passions, when they leave no hatred behind them, that which becomes them best, is oblivion.

Such conduct, and such deeds, crowned by her heedless flight into England and the imprudent abandonment of her person to Elizabeth, seem little calculated to make the touching and pathetic heroine we are accustomed to admire and cherish in Marie Stuart. Yet she deserves all pity; and we have but to follow her through the third and last portion of her life, through that long, unjust, and sorrowful captivity of nineteen years (May 18, 1568, to February 5, 1587) to render it unconsciously. Struggling without defence against a crafty and ambitious rival, liable to mistakes from friends outside, the victim of a grasping and tenacious policy which never let go its prey and took so long a time to torture before devouring it, she never for a single instant fails towards herself; she rises ever higher. That faculty of hope which so often had misled her becomes the grace of her condition and a virtue. She moves the whole world in the interest of her misfortunes; she stirs it with a charm all-powerful. Her cause transforms and magnifies itself. It is no longer that of a passionate and heedless woman punished for her frailties and her inconstancy; it is that of the legitimate heiress of the crown of England, exposed in her dungeon to the eyes of

the world, a faithful, unshaken Catholic, who refuses to sacrifice her faith to the interests of her ambition or even to the salvation of her life. The beauty and grandeur of such a rôle were fitted to stir the tender and naturally believing heart of Marie Stuart. She fills her soul with that rôle; she substitutes it, from the first moment of her captivity, for all her former personal sentiments, which, little by little, subside and expire within her as the fugitive occasions which aroused them pass away. She seems to remember them no more than she does the waves and the foam of those brilliant lakes that she has crossed. For nineteen years the whole of Catholicity is disquieted and impassioned about her; and she is there, half-heroine, half-martyr, making the signal and waving her banner behind the bars. Captive that she was, do not accuse her of conspiring against Elizabeth; for with her ideas of right divine and of absolute kingship from sovereign to sovereign, it was not conspiring, she being a prisoner, to seek for the triumph of her cause; it was simply pursuing the war.

From the moment when Marie Stuart is a prisoner, when we see her crushed, deprived of all that comforts and consoles, infirm, alas! with whitened hair before her time, when we hear her, in the longest and most remarkable of her letters to Elizabeth (November 8, 1582), repeating for the twentieth time: "Your prison, without right, without just grounds, has already so destroyed my body that you will soon see an end if this lasts much longer; so that my enemies have no great time to satisfy their cruelty against me; nought remains to me but my soul, the which it is not in your power to render captive," — when we dwell on this mixture of pride and plaint, pity carries us along; our hearts speak; the tender charm with which she was endowed, and which acted upon all who approached her, asserts its power and lays its spell upon us even at this distance. It is not

by the text of a scribe, nor yet with the logic of a statesman that we judge her; it is with the heart of a knight, or rather, let me say, with that of a man. Humanity, pity, religion, supreme poetic grace, all those invincible and immortal powers feel themselves concerned in her person and cry to us across the ages. "Bear these tidings," she said to her old Melvil at the moment of death: "that I die firm in my religion, a true Catholic, a true Scotchwoman, a true Frenchwoman." These beliefs, these patriotisms and nationalities thus evoked by Marie Stuart have made that long echo that replies to her with tears and love.

What reproach can we make to one who, after nineteen years of anguish and moral torture, searched, during the night that preceded her death, in the "Lives of the Saints" (which her ladies were accustomed to read to her nightly) for some great sinner whom God had pardoned. She stopped at the story of the penitent thief, which seemed to her the most reassuring example of human confidence and divine mercy; and while Jean Kennedy, one of her ladies, read it to her, she said: "He was a great sinner, but not so great as I. I implore our Lord, in memory of His Passion, to remember and have mercy upon me, as He had upon him, in the hour of death." Those true and sincere feelings, that contrite humility in her last and sublime moments, this perfect intelligence, and profound need of pardon, leave us without means of seeing any stain of the past upon her except through tears.

It was thus that old Étienne Pasquier felt. Having to relate in his "Recherches" the death of Marie Stuart, he compares it with the tragic history of the Connétable de Saint-Pol, and that of the Connétable de Bourbon, which left him under a mixture of conflicting sentiments. "But in that of which I now discourse," he says, "methinks I see

only tears; and is there, by chance, a man who, reading this, will not forgive his eyes?"

M. Mignet, who examines all things as an historian, and gives but short pages to emotion, has admirably distinguished and explained the different phases of Marie Stuart's captivity, and the secret springs which were set to work at various periods. He has, especially, cast a new light, aided by Spanish documents in the Archives of Simancas, on the slow preparations of the enterprise undertaken by Philip II., that fruitless and tardy crusade, delayed until after the death of Marie Stuart, which ended in the disastrous shipwreck of the invincible Armada.

Issuing from this brilliant and stormy episode of the history of the sixteenth century, which has been so strongly and judiciously set before us by M. Mignet, full of these scenes of violence, treachery, and iniquity, and without having the innocence to believe that humanity has done forever with such deeds, we congratulate ourselves in spite of everything, and rejoice that we live in an age of softened and ameliorated public morals. We exclaim with M. de Tavannes, when he relates in his "Memoirs" the life and death of Marie Stuart: "Happy he who lives in a safe State; where good and evil are rewarded and punished according to their deserts." Happy the times and the communities where a certain general morality and human respect for opinion, where a penal Code, and especially the continual check of publicity, exist to interdict, even to the boldest, those criminal resolutions which every human heart, if left to itself, is ever tempted to engender.

Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi* (1851).

DISCOURSE IV.

ÉLISABETH OF FRANCE, QUEEN OF SPAIN.

I WRITE here of the Queen of Spain, Élisabeth of France, a true daughter of France in everything, a beautiful, wise, virtuous, spiritual, and good queen if ever there was one; and I believe since Saint Élisabeth no one has borne that name who surpassed her in all sorts of virtues and perfections, although that beautiful name of Élisabeth has been fateful of goodness, virtue, sanctity, and perfection to those who have borne it, as many believe.[1]

When she was born at Fontainebleau, the king her grandfather, and her father and mother made very great joy of it; you would have said she was a lucky star bringing good hap to France; for her baptism brought peace to us, as did her marriage. See how good fortunes are gathered in one person to be distributed on diverse occasions; for then it was that peace was made with King Henry [VIII.] of England; and to confirm and strengthen it our king made him her sponsor and gave to his goddaughter the beautiful name of Élisabeth; at whose birth and baptism the rejoicings were as great as at those of the little King François the last.

Child as she was, she promised to be some great thing at a future day; and when she came to be grown up she promised it more surely still; for all virtue and goodness

[1] She was the daughter of Henri II. and Catherine de' Medici, married to Philip II., King of Spain, after the death of Queen Mary of England. — TR.

abounded in her, so that the whole Court admired her, and prognosticated a fine grandeur and great royalty to her in time. So they say that when King Henri married his second daughter, Madame Claude, to the Duc de Lorraine, there were some who remonstrated against the wrong done to the elder in marrying the younger before her; but the king made this response: "My daughter Élisabeth is such that a duchy is not for her to marry. She must have a kingdom; and even so, not one of the lesser but one of the greater kingdoms; so great is she herself in all things; which assures me that she can miss none, wherefore she can wait."

You would have said he prophesied the future. He did not fail on his side to seek and procure one for her; for when peace was made between the two kings at Cercan she was promised in marriage to Don Carlos, Prince of Spain, a brave and gallant prince and the image of his grandfather, the Emperor Charles, had he lived. But the King of Spain, his father, becoming a widower by the death of the Queen of England, his wife and cousin-german, and having seen the portrait of Madame Élisabeth and finding her very beautiful and much to his liking, cut the ground from under the feet of his son and did himself the charity of wedding her himself. On which the French and Spaniards said with one voice that one would think she was conceived and born before the world and reserved by God until his will had joined her with this great king, her husband; for it must have been predestined that he, being so great, so powerful, and thus approaching in all grandeur to the skies, should marry no other princess than one so perfect and accomplished. When the Duke of Alba came to see her and espouse her for the king, his master, he found her so extremely agreeable and suited to the said master that he said

she was a princess who would make the King of Spain very easily forget his grief for his last two wives, the English and the Portuguese.

After this, as I have heard from a good quarter, the said prince, Don Carlos, having seen her, became so distractedly in love with her, and so full of jealousy, that he bore a great grudge against his father, and was so angry with him for having deprived him of so fine a prize that he never loved him more, but reproached him with the great wrong and insult he had done him in taking her who had been promised to him solemnly in the treaty of peace. They do say that this was, in part, the cause of his death, with other topics which I shall not speak of at this hour; for he could not keep himself from loving her in his soul, honouring and revering her, so charming and agreeable did she seem in his eyes, as certainly she was in everything.

Her face was handsome, her hair and eyes so shaded her complexion and made it the more attractive that I have heard say in Spain that the courtiers dared not look upon her for fear of being taken in love and causing jealousy to the king, her husband, and, consequently, running risk of their lives.

The Church people did the same from fear of temptation, they not having strength to command their flesh to look at her without being tempted. Although she had had the small-pox, after being grown-up and married, they had so well preserved her face with poultices of fresh eggs (a very proper thing for that purpose) that no marks appeared. I saw the queen, her mother, very much concerned to send her by many couriers many remedies; but this of the egg-poultice was sovereign.

Her figure was very fine, taller than that of her sisters, which made her much admired in Spain, where such tall women are rare, and for that the more esteemed. And with

this figure she had a bearing, a majesty, a gesture, a gait and grace that intermingled the Frenchwoman with the Spaniard in sweetness and gravity; so that, as I myself saw, when she passed through her Court, or went out to certain places, whether churches, or monasteries, or gardens, there was such great press to see her, and the crowd of persons was so thick, there was no turning round in the mob; and happy was he or she who could say in the evening, "I saw the queen." It was said, and I saw it myself, that no queen was ever loved in Spain like her (begging pardon of the Queen Isabella of Castile), and her subjects called her *la reyna de la paz y de la bondad*, that is to say, "the queen of peace and kindness;" but our Frenchmen called her "the olive-branch of peace."

A year before she came to France to visit her mother at Bayonne, she fell ill to such extremity that the physicians gave her up. On which a little Italian doctor, who had no great vogue at Court, presenting himself to the king, declared that if he were allowed to act he would cure her; which the king permitted, she being almost dead. The doctor undertook her and gave her a medicine, after which they suddenly saw the colour return miraculously to her face, her speech came back, and then, soon after, her convalescence began. Nevertheless the whole Court and all the people of Spain blocked the roads with processions and comings and goings to churches and hospitals for her health's sake, some in shirts, others bare-footed and bare-headed, offering oblations, prayers, orisons, intercessions to God, with fasts, macerations of the body, and other good and saintly devotions for her health; so that every one believes firmly that these good prayers, tears, vows, and cries to God were the cause of her cure, rather than the medicine of that doctor.

I arrived in Spain a month after this recovery of her

health; but I saw so much devotion among the people in giving thanks to God, by fêtes, rejoicings, magnificences, fire-works, that there was no doubting in any way how much they felt. I saw nothing else in Spain as I travelled through it, and reaching the Court just two days after she left her room, I saw her come out and get into her coach, sitting at the door of it, which was her usual place, because such beauty should not be hidden within, but displayed openly.

She was dressed in a gown of white satin all covered with silver trimmings, her face uncovered. I think that nothing was ever seen more beautiful than this queen, as I had the boldness to tell her; for she had given me a right good welcome and cheer, coming as I did from France and the Court, and bringing her news of the king, her good brother, and the queen, her good mother; for all her joy and pleasure was to know of them. It was not I alone who thought her beautiful, but all the Court and all the people of Madrid thought so likewise; so that it might be said that even illness favoured her, for after doing her such cruel harm it embellished her skin, making it so delicate and polished that she was certainly more beautiful than ever before.

Leaving thus her chamber for the first time, to do the best and saintliest thing she could she went to the churches to give thanks to God for the favour of her health; and this good work she continued for the space of fifteen days, not to speak of the vow she made to Our Lady of Guadalupe; letting the whole people see her face uncovered (as was her usual fashion) till you might have thought they worshipped her, so to speak, rather than honoured or revered her.

So when she died [1568], as I have heard the late M. de Lignerolles, who saw her die, relate, he having gone to carry to the King of Spain the news of the victory of Jarnac, never were a people so afflicted, so disconsolate; none ever shed

so many tears, being unable to recover themselves in any way, but mourning her with despair incessantly.

She made a noble end [*æt.* 23], leaving this world with firm courage, and desiring much the other.

Sinister things have been said of her death, as having been hastened. I have heard one of her ladies tell that the first time she saw her husband she looked at him so fixedly that the king, not liking it, said to her: *Que mirais? Si tengo canas?* which means: "What are you gazing at? Is my hair white?" These words touched her so much to the heart that ever after her ladies augured ill for her.

It is said that a Jesuit, a man of importance, speaking of her one day in a sermon, and praising her rare virtues, charities, and kindness, let fall the words that she had wickedly been made to die, innocent as she was; for which he was banished to the farthest depths of the Indies of Spain. This is very true, as I have been told.

There are other conjectures so great that silence must be kept about them; but very true it is that this princess was the best of her time and loved by every one.

So long as she lived in Spain never did she forget the affection she bore to France, and in that was not like Germaine de Foix, second wife of King Ferdinand, who when she saw herself raised to such high rank became so haughty that she made no account of her own country, and disdained it so much that, when Louis XII., her uncle, and Ferdinand came to Savonne, she, being with her husband, held herself so high that never would she notice a Frenchman, not even her brother Gaston de Foix, Duc de Nemours, neither would she deign to speak or look at the greatest persons of France who were present; for which she was much ridiculed. But after the death of her husband she suffered for this, having fallen from her high estate and being held in no great ac-

count, whereat she was miserable. They say there are none so vainglorious as persons of low estate who rise to grandeur; not that I mean to say that princess was of low estate, being of the house of Foix, a very illustrious and great house; but from simple daughter of a count to be queen of so great a kingdom was a rise which gave occasion to feel much glory, but not to forget herself or abuse her station towards a King of France, her uncle, and her nearest relations and others of the land of her birth. In this she showed she lacked a great mind; or else that she was foolishly vainglorious. For surely there is a difference between the house of Foix and the house of France; not that I mean to say the house of Foix is not great and very noble, but the house of France — hey!

Our Queen Élisabeth never did like that. She was born great in herself, great in mind and very able, so that a royal grandeur could not fail her. She had, if she had wished it, double cause over Germaine de Foix to be haughty and arrogant, for she was daughter of a great King of France, and married to the greatest king in the world, he being not the monarch of one kingdom, but of many, or, as one might say, of all the Spains, — Jerusalem, the Two Sicilies, Majorca, Minorca, Sardinia, and the Western Indies, which seem indeed a world, besides being lord of infinitely more lands and greater seigneuries than Ferdinand ever had. Therefore we should laud our princess for her gentleness, which is well becoming in a great personage towards each and all; and likewise for the affection she showed to Frenchmen, who, on arriving in Spain, were welcomed by her with so benign a face, the least among them as well as the greatest, that none ever left her without feeling honoured and content. I can speak for myself, as to the honour she did me in talking to me often during the time I stayed

there; asking me, at all hours, news of the king, the queen her mother, messieurs her brothers, and madame her sister, with others of the Court, not forgetting to name them, each and all, and to inquire about them; so that I wondered much how she could remember these things as if she had just left the Court of France; and I often asked her how it was possible she could keep such memories in the midst of her grandeur.

When she came to Bayonne she showed herself just as familiar with the ladies and maids of honour, neither more nor less, as she was when a girl; and as for those who were absent or married since her departure, she inquired with great interest about them all. She did the same to the gentlemen of her acquaintance, and to those who were not, informing herself as to who the latter were, and saying: "Such and such were at Court in my day, I knew them well; but these were not, and I desire to know them." In short, she contented every one.

When she made her entry into Bayonne she was mounted on an ambling horse, most superbly and richly caparisoned with pearl embroideries which had formerly been used by the deceased empress when she made her entries into her towns, and were thought to be worth one hundred thousand crowns, and some say more. She had a noble grace on horseback, and it was fine to see her; she showed herself so beautiful and so agreeable that every one was charmed with her.

We all had commands to go to meet her, and accompany her on this entry, as indeed it was our duty to do; and we were gratified when, having made her our reverence, she did us the honour to thank us; and to me above all she gave good greeting, because it was scarcely four months since I had left her in Spain; which touched me much, receiving

such favour above my companions and more honour than belonged to me.

On my return from Portugal and from Pignon de Belis [Penon de Velez], a fortress which was taken in Barbary, she welcomed me very warmly, asking me news of the conquest and of the army. She presented me to Don Carlos, who came into her room, together with the princess, and to Don Juan [of Austria, Philip II.'s brother, the conqueror of Lepanto]. I was two days without going to see her, on account of a toothache I had got upon the sea. She asked Riberac, maid of honour, where I was and if I were ill, and having heard what my trouble was she sent me her apothecary, who brought me an herb very special for that ache, which, on merely being held in the palm of the hand, cures the pain suddenly, as it did very quickly for me.

I can boast that I was the first to bring the queen-mother word of Queen Élisabeth's desire to come to France and see her, for which she thanked me much both then and later; for the Queen of Spain was her good daughter, whom she loved above the others, and who returned her the like; for Queen Élisabeth so honoured, respected, and feared her that I have heard her say she never received a letter from the queen, her mother, without trembling and dreading lest she was angry with her and had written some painful thing; though, God knows, she had never said one to her since she was married, nor been angry with her; but the daughter feared the mother so much that she always had that apprehension.

It was on this journey to Bayonne that Pompadour the elder having killed Chambret at Bordeaux, wrongfully as some say, the queen-mother was so angry that if she could have caught him she would have had him beheaded, and no one dared speak to her of mercy.

M. Strozzi, who was fond of the said Pompadour, bethought him of employing his sister, Signora Clarice Strozzi, Comtesse de Tenda, whom the Queen of Spain loved from her earliest years, they having studied together. The said countess, who loved her brother, did not refuse him, but begged the Queen of Spain to intercede; who answered that she would do anything for her except that, because she dreaded to irritate and annoy the queen, her mother, and displease her. But the countess continuing to importune her, she employed a third person who sounded the ford privately, telling the queen-mother that the queen, her daughter, would have asked this pardon to gratify the said countess had she not feared to displease her. To which the queen-mother replied that the thing must be wholly impossible to make her refuse it. On which the Queen of Spain made her little request, but still in fear; and suddenly it was granted. Such was the kindness of this princess, and her virtue in honouring and fearing the queen, her mother, she being herself so great. Alas! the Christian proverb did not hold good in her case, namely: "He that would live long years must love and honour and fear his father and mother;" for, in spite of doing all that, she died in the lovely and pleasant April of her days; for now, at the time I write, [1591] she would have been, had she lived, forty-six years old. Alas! that this fair sun disappeared so soon in a darksome grave, when she might have lighted this fine world for twenty good years without even then being touched by age; for she was by nature and complexion fitted to keep her beauty long, and even had old age attacked her, her beauty was of a kind to be the stronger.

Surely, if her death was hard to Spaniards, it was still more bitter to us Frenchmen, for as long as she lived France was never invaded by those quarrels which, since then,

Spain has put upon us; so well did she know how to win and persuade the king, her husband, for our good and our peace; the which should make us ever mourn her.

She left two daughters, the most honourable and virtuous infantas in Christendom. When they were large enough, that is to say, three or four years old, she begged her husband to leave the eldest wholly to her that she might bring her up in the French fashion. Which the king willingly granted. So she took her in hand, and gave her a fine and noble training in the style of her own country, so that to-day that infanta is as French as her sister, the Duchesse de Savoie, is Spanish; she loves and cherishes France as her mother taught her, and you may be sure that all the influence and power that she has with the king, her father, she employs for the help and succour of those poor Frenchmen whom she knows are suffering in Spanish hands. I have heard it said that after the rout of M. Strozzi, very many French soldiers and gentlemen having been put in the galleys, she went, when at Lisbon, to visit all the galleys that were then there; and all the Frenchmen whom she found on the chain, to the number of six twenties, she caused to be released, giving them money to reach their own land; so that the captains of the galleys were obliged to hide those that remained.

She was a very beautiful princess and very agreeable, of an extremely graceful mind, who knew all the affairs of the kingdom of the king, her father, and was well trained in them. I hope to speak of her hereafter by herself, for she deserves all honour for the love she bears to France; she says she can never part with it, having good right to it; and we, if we have obligation to this princess for loving us, how much more should we have to the queen, her mother, for having thus brought her up and taught her.

Would to God I were a good enough petrarchizer to exalt as I desire this Élisabeth of France! for, if the beauty of her body gives me most ample matter, that of her fine soul gives me still more, as these verses, which were made upon her at Court at the time she was married, will testify:

Happy the prince whom Heaven ordains
To Élisabeth's sweet acquaintance:
More precious far than crown or sceptre
The glad enjoyment of so great a treasure.
Gifts most divine she had at birth,
The proof and the effect of which we see;
Her youthful years showed their appearance,
But now her virtues bear their perfect fruit.

When this queen was put into the hands of the Duc de l'Infantado and the Cardinal de Burgos, who were commissioned by their king to receive her at Roncevaux in a great hall, after the said deputies had made their reverence, she rising from her chair to welcome them, Cardinal de Burgos harangued her; to whom she made response so honourably, and in such fine fashion and good grace that he was quite amazed; for she spoke in the best manner, having been very well taught.

After which the King of Navarre, who was there as her principal conductor, and also leader of all the army which was with her, was summoned to deliver her, according to the order, which was shown to the Cardinal de Bourbon, to receive her. The king replied, for he spoke well, and said: "I place in your hands this princess, whom I have brought from the house of the greatest king in the world to be placed in the hands of the most illustrious king on earth. Knowing you to be very sufficient and chosen by the king your master to receive her, I make no difficulty nor doubt that you will acquit yourselves worthily of this trust, which

I now discharge upon you; begging you to have peculiar care of her health and person, for she deserves it; and I wish you to know that never did there enter Spain so great an ornament of all virtues and chastities, as in time you will know well by results."

The Spaniards replied at once that already at first sight they had very ample knowledge of this from her manner and grave majesty; and, in truth, her virtues were rare.

She had great knowledge, because the queen her mother had made her study well under M. de Saint-Étienne, her preceptor, whom she always loved and respected until her death. She loved poesy, and to read it. She spoke well, in either French or Spanish, with a very noble air and much good grace. Her Spanish language was beautiful, as dainty and attractive as possible; she learned it in three or four months after coming to Spain.

To Frenchmen she always spoke French; never being willing to discontinue it, but reading it daily in the fine books they sent from France, which she was very anxious to have brought to her. To Spaniards and all others she spoke Spanish and very well. In short, she was perfect in all things, and so magnificent and liberal that no one could be more so. She never wore her gowns a second time, but gave them to her ladies and maids; and God knows what gowns they were, so rich and so superb that the least was reckoned at three or four hundred crowns; for the king, her husband, kept her most superbly in such matters; so that every day she had a new one, as I was told by her tailor, who from being a very poor man became so rich that nothing exceeded him, as I saw myself.

She dressed well, and very pompously, and her habiliments became her much; among other things her sleeves were slashed, with scollops which they call in Spanish *pun-*

tas; her head-dress the same, where nothing lacked. Those who see her thus in painting admire her; I therefore leave you to think what pleasure they had who saw her face to face, with all her gestures and good graces.

As for pearls and jewels in great quantity, she never lacked them, for the king, her husband, ordered a great estate for her and for her household. Alas! what served her that for such an end? Her ladies and maids of honour felt it. Those who, being French, could not constrain themselves to live in a foreign land, she caused, by a prayer which she made to the king, her husband, to receive each four thousand crowns on their marriage; as was done to Mesdamoiselles Riberac, sisters, otherwise called Guitignières, de Fumel, the two sisters de Thorigny, de Noyau, d'Arne, de La Motte au Groin, Montal, and several others. Those who were willing to remain were better off, like Mesdamoiselles de Saint-Ana and de Saint-Legier, who had the honour to be governesses to Mesdames the infantas, and were married very richly to two great seigneurs; they were the wisest, for better is it to be great in a foreign country than little in your own,—as Jesus said: "No one is a prophet in his own land."

This is all, at this time, that I shall say of this good, wise and very virtuous queen, though later I may speak of her. But I give this sonnet which was written to her praise by an honourable gentleman, she being still Madame, though promised in marriage:—

"Princess, to whom the skies give such advantage
That, for the part you have in Heaven's divinity,
They grant you all the virtues of this earth,
And crown you with the gift of immortality:

"And since it pleased them that in early years
Your heavenly gifts of deity be seen,

So that you temper with a humble gravity
The royal grandeur of your sacred heritage:

"And also since it pleases them to favour you,
And place in you the best of all their best,
So that your name is cherished everywhere:

"Methinks that name should undergo a change,
And though we call you now Élisabeth of France,
You should be named Élisabeth of Heaven."

I know that I may be reproved for putting into this Discourse and others preceding it too many little particulars which are quite superfluous. I think so myself; but I know that if they displease some persons, they will please others. Methinks it is not enough when we laud persons to say that they are handsome, wise, virtuous, valorous, valiant, magnanimous, liberal, splendid, and very perfect; those are general descriptions and praises and commonplace sayings, borrowed from everybody. We should specify such things and describe particularly all perfections, so that one may, as it were, touch them with the finger. Such is my opinion, and it pleases me to retain and rejoice my memory with things that I have seen.

Epitaph on the said Queen.

"Beneath this stone lies Élisabeth of France:
Who was Queen of Spain and queen of peace,
Christian and Catholic. Her lovely presence
Was useful to us all. Now that her noble bones
Are dry and crumbling, lying under ground,
We have nought but ills and wars and troubles."

DISCOURSE V.

MARGUERITE, QUEEN OF FRANCE AND OF NAVARRE, SOLE DAUGHTER NOW REMAINING OF THE NOBLE HOUSE OF FRANCE.[1]

When I consider the miseries and ill-adventures of that beautiful Queen of Scotland of whom I have heretofore spoken, and of other princesses and ladies whom I shall not name, fearing by such digression to impair my discourse on the Queen of Navarre, of whom I now speak, not being as yet Queen of France, I cannot think otherwise than that Fortune, omnipotent goddess of weal and woe, is the opposing enemy of human beauty; for if ever there was in the world a being of perfect beauty it is the Queen of Navarre, and yet she has been little favoured by Fortune, so far; so that one may indeed say that Fortune was so jealous of Nature for having made this princess beautiful that she wished to run counter in fate. However that may be, her beauty is such that the blows of said Fortune have no ascendency upon her, for the generous courage she drew at birth from so many brave and valorous kings, her father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and their ancestors, has enabled her hitherto to make a brave resistance.

To speak now of the beauty of this rare princess: I think that all those who are, will be, or ever have been beside it are plain, and cannot have beauty; for the fire of hers so burns the wings of others that they dare not hover, or even

[1] Daughter of Henri II. and Catherine de' Medici,—"La Reine Margot."—Tr.

appear, around it. If there be any unbeliever so chary of faith as not to give credence to the miracles of God and Nature, let him contemplate her fine face, so nobly formed, and become converted, and say that Mother Nature, that perfect workwoman, has put all her rarest and subtlest wits to the making of her. For whether she shows herself smiling or grave, the sight of her serves to enkindle every one; so beauteous are her features, so well defined her lineaments, so transparent and agreeable her eyes that they pass description; and, what is more, that beautiful face rests on a body still more beautiful, superb, and rich, — of a port and majesty more like to a goddess of heaven than a princess of earth; for it is believed, on the word of several, that no goddess was ever seen more beautiful; so that, in order to duly proclaim her beauty, virtues, and merit, God must lengthen the earth and heighten the sky beyond where they now are, for space in the airs and on the land is lacking for the flight of her perfection and renown.

Those are the beauties of body and mind in this fair princess, which I at this time represent, like a good painter, after nature and without art. I speak of those to be seen externally; for those that are secret and hidden beneath white linen and rich accoutrements cannot be here depicted or judged except as being very beautiful and rare; but this must be by faith, presumption, and credence, for sight is interdicted. Great hardship truly to be forced to see so beautiful a picture, made by the hand of a divine workman, in the half only of its perfection; but modesty and laudable shamefacedness thus ordain it — for they lodge among princesses and great ladies as they do among commoner folk.

To bring a few examples to show how the beauty of this queen was admired and held for rare: I remember that when the Polish ambassadors came to France, to announce to our

King Henri [then Duc d'Anjou] his election to the kingdom of Poland, and to render him homage and obedience, after they had made their reverence to King Charles, to the queen-mother, and to their king, they made it, very particularly, and for several days, to Monsieur, and to the King and Queen of Navarre; but the day when they made it to the said Queen of Navarre she seemed to them so beautiful and so superbly and richly accoutred and adorned, and with such great majesty and grace that they were speechless at such beauty. Among others, there was Lasqui, the chief of the embassy, whom I heard say, as he retired, overcome by the sight: "No, never do I wish to see such beauty again. Willingly would I do as do the Turks, pilgrims to Mecca, where the sepulchre of their prophet Mahomet is, and where they stand speechless, ravished, and so transfixed at the sight of that superb mosque that they wish to see nothing more and burn their eyes out with hot irons till they lose their sight, so subtly is it done; saying that nothing more could be seen as fine, and therefore would they see nothing." Thus said that Pole about the beauty of our princess. And if the Poles were won to admiration, so were others. I instance here Don Juan of Austria, who (as I have said elsewhere), passing through France as stilly as he could, and reaching Paris, knowing that that night a solemn ball was given at the Louvre, went there disguised, as much to see Queen Marguerite of Navarre as for any other purpose. He there had means and leisure to see her at his ease, dancing, and led by the king, her brother, as was usual. He gazed upon her long, admired her, and then proclaimed her high above the beauties of Spain and Italy (two regions, nevertheless, most fertile in beauty), saying these words in Spanish: "Though the beauty of that queen is more divine than human, she is made to damn and ruin men rather than to save them."

Shortly after, he saw her again as she went to the baths of Liège, Don Juan being then at Namur, where she had to pass; the which crowned all his hopes to enjoy so fine a sight, and he went to meet her with great and splendid Spanish magnificence, receiving her as though she were the Queen Élisabeth, her sister, in the latter's lifetime his queen, and Queen of Spain. And though he was most enchanted with the beauty of her body, he was the same with that of her mind, as I hope to show in its proper place. But it was not Don Juan alone who praised and delighted to praise her, but all his great and brave Spanish captains did the same, and even the very soldiers of those far-famed bands, who went about saying among themselves, in soldierly chorus, that "the conquest of such beauty was better than that of a kingdom, and happy would be the soldiers who, to serve her, would die beneath her banner."

It is not surprising that such people, well-born and noble, should think this princess beautiful, but I have seen Turks coming on an embassy to the king her brother, barbarians that they were, lose themselves in gazing at her, and say that the pomp of their Grand Signior in going to his mosque or marching with his army was not so fine to see as the beauty of this queen.

In short, I have seen an infinity of other strangers who have come to France and to the Court expressly to behold her whose fame had gone from end to end of Europe, so they said.

I once saw a gallant Neapolitan knight, who, having come to Paris and the Court, and not finding the said queen, delayed his return two months in order to see her, and having seen her he said these words: "In other days, the Princess of Salerno bore the like reputation for beauty in our city of Naples, so that a foreigner who had gone there and had not

seen her, when he returned and related his visit, and was asked had he seen that princess, and answered no, was told that in that case he had not seen Naples. Thus I, if on my return without seeing this beautiful princess I were asked had I seen France and the Court, could scarcely say I had, for she is its ornament and enrichment. But now, having seen and contemplated her so well, I can say that I have seen the greatest beauty in the world, and that our Princess of Salerno is as nothing to her. Now I am well content to go, having enjoyed so fine a sight. I leave you Frenchmen to think how happy you should be to see at your ease and daily her fine face; and to approach that flame divine, which can warm and kindle frigid hearts from afar more than the beauty of our most beauteous dames near-by." Such were the words said to me one day by that charming Neapolitan knight.

An honourable French gentleman, whom I could name, seeing her one evening, in her finest lustre and most stately majesty in a ball-room, said to me these words: "Ah! if the Sieur des Essarts, who, in his books of 'Amadis' forced himself with such pains to well and richly describe to the world the beautiful Nicquée and her glory, had seen this queen in his day he would not have needed to borrow so many rich and noble words to depict and set forth Nicquée's beauty; 't would have sufficed him to declare she was the semblance and image of the Queen of Navarre, unique in this world; and thus the beauteous Nicquée would have been better pictured than she has been, and without superfluity of words."

Therefore, M. de Ronsard had good reason to compose that glorious elegy found among his works in honour of this beautiful Princess Marguerite of France, then not married, in which he has introduced the goddess Venus asking

her son whether in his rambles here below, seeing the ladies of the Court of France, he had found a beauty that surpassed her own. "Yes, mother," Love replied, "I have found one on whom the glory of the finest sky is shed since ever she was born." Venus flushed red and would not credit it, but sent a messenger, one of her Charites, to earth to examine that beauty and make a just report. On which we read in the elegy a rich and fine description of the charms of that accomplished princess, in the mouth of the Charite Pasithea, the reading of which cannot fail to please the world. But M. de Ronsard, as a very honourable and able lady said to me, stopped short and lacked a little something, in that he should have told how Pasithea returned to heaven, and there, discharging her commission, said to Venus that her son had only told the half; the which so saddened and provoked the goddess into jealousy, making her blame Jupiter for the wrong he did to form on earth a beauty that shamed those of heaven (and principally hers, the rarest of them all), that henceforth she wore mourning and made abstinence from pleasures and delights; for there is nothing so vexatious to a beautiful and perfect lady as to tell her she has her equal, or that another can surpass her.

Now, we must note that if our queen was beauteous in herself and in her nature, also she knew well how to array herself; and so carefully and richly was she dressed, both for her body and her head, that nothing lacked to give her full perfection.

To the Queen Isabella of Bavaria, wife of King Charles VI., belongs the praise of having brought to France the pomps and gorgeousness that henceforth clothed most splendidly and gorgeously the ladies;[1] for in the old tapestries of that

[1] Brantôme's words are *gorgiasetés* and *gorgiasment;* do they mark the introduction of ruffs around the neck, *gorge?* —Tr.

period in the houses of our kings we see portrayed the ladies attired as they then were, in nought but drolleries, slovenliness, and vulgarities, in place of the beautiful, superb fashions, dainty headgear, inventions, and ornaments of our queen; from which the ladies of the Court and France take pattern, so that ever since, appearing in her modes, they are now great ladies instead of simple madams, and so a hundredfold more charming and desirable. It is to our Queen Marguerite that ladies owe this obligation.

I remember (for I was there) that when the queen mother took this queen, her daughter, to the King of Navarre, her husband, she passed through Coignac and made some stay. While they were there, came various grand and honourable ladies of the region to see them and do them reverence, who were all amazed at the beauty of the princess, and could not surfeit themselves in praising her to her mother, she being lost in joy. Wherefore she begged her daughter to array herself one day most gorgeously in the fine and superb apparel that she wore at Court for great and magnificent pomps and festivals, in order to give pleasure to these worthy dames. Which she did, to obey so good a mother; appearing robed superbly in a gown of silver tissue and dove-colour, *à la bolonnoise* [*bouillonnée* — with puffs ?], and hanging sleeves, a rich head-dress with a white veil, neither too large nor yet too small; the whole accompanied with so noble a majesty and good grace that she seemed more a goddess of heaven than a queen of earth. The queen-mother said to her: "My daughter, you look well." To which she answered: "Madame, I begin early to wear and to wear out my gowns and the fashions I have brought from Court, because when I return I shall bring nothing with me only scissors and stuffs to dress me then according to current fashions." The queen-mother asked her: "What do you mean by that, my

daughter? Is it not you yourself who invent and produce these fashions of dress? Wherever you go the Court will take them from you., not you from the Court." Which was true; for after she returned she was always in advance of the Court, so well did she know how to invent in her dainty mind all sorts of charming things.

But the beauteous queen in whatsoever fashion she dressed, were it *à la française* with her tall head-dress, or in a simple coif, with her grand veil, or merely in a cap, could never prove which of these fashions became her most and made her most beautiful, admirable, and lovable; for she well knew how to adapt herself to every mode, adjusting each new device in a way not common and quite inimitable. So that if other ladies took her pattern to form it for themselves they could not rival her, as I have noticed a hundred times. I have seen her dressed in a robe of white satin that shimmered much, a trifle of rose-colour mingling in it, with a veil of tan crêpe or Roman gauze flung carelessly round her head; yet nothing was ever more beautiful; and whatever may be said of the goddesses of the olden time and the empresses as we see them on ancient coins, they look, though splendidly accoutred, like chambermaids beside her.

I have often heard our courtiers dispute as to which attire became and embellished her the most, about which each had his own opinion. For my part, the most becoming array in which I ever saw her was, as I think, and so did others, on the day when the queen-mother made a fête at the Tuileries for the Poles. She was robed in a velvet gown of Spanish rose, covered with spangles, with a cap of the same velvet, adorned with plumes and jewels of such splendour as never was. She looked so beautiful in this attire, as many told her, that she wore it often and was painted in it; so that among her various portraits this one carries the day over all

others, as the eyes of good judges will tell, for there are plenty of her pictures to judge by.

When she appeared, thus dressed, at the Tuileries, I said to M. de Ronsard, who stood next to me: "Tell the truth, monsieur, do you not think that beautiful queen thus apparelled is like Aurora, as she comes at dawn with her fair white face surrounded with those rosy tints? — for face and gown have much in sympathy and likeness." M. de Ronsard avowed that I was right; and on this my comparison, thinking it fine, he made a sonnet, which I would fain have now, to insert it here.

I also saw this our great queen at the first States-general at Blois on the day the king, her brother, made his harangue. She was dressed in a robe of orange and black (the ground being black with many spangles) and her great veil of ceremony; and being seated according to her rank she appeared so beautiful and admirable that I heard more than three hundred persons in that assembly say they were better instructed and delighted by the contemplation of such divine beauty than by listening to the grave and noble words of the king, her brother, though he spoke and harangued his best. I have also seen her dressed in her natural hair without any artifice or peruke; and though her hair was very black (having derived that from her father, King Henri), she knew so well how to curl and twist and arrange it after the fashion of her sister, the Queen of Spain, who wore none but her own hair, that such coiffure and adornment became her as well as, or better than, any other. That is what it is to have beauties by nature, which surpasses all artifice, no matter what it may be. And yet she did not like the fashion much and seldom used it, but preferred perukes most daintily fashioned.

In short, I should never have done did I try to describe all her adornments and forms of attire in which she was ever

more and more beauteous; for she changed them often, and all were so becoming and appropriate, as though Nature and Art were striving to outdo each other in making her beautiful. But this is not all; for her fine accoutrements and adornments never ventured to cover her beautiful throat or her lovely bosom, fearing to wrong the eyes of all the world that roved upon so fine an object; for never was there seen the like in form and whiteness, and so full and plump that often the courtiers died with envy when they saw the ladies, as I have seen them, those who were her intimates, have license to kiss her with great delight.

I remember that a worthy gentleman, newly arrived at Court, who had never seen her, when he beheld her said to me these words: "I am not surprised that all you gentlemen should like the Court; for if you had no other pleasure than daily to see that princess, you have as much as though you lived in a terrestrial paradise."

Roman emperors of the olden time, to please the people and give them pleasure, exhibited games and combats in their theatres; but to give pleasure to the people of France and gain their friendship, it was enough to let them often see Queen Marguerite, and enjoy the contemplation of so divine a face, which she never hid behind a mask like other ladies of our Court, for nearly all the time she went uncovered; and once, on a flowery Easter Day at Blois, still being Madame, sister of the king (although her marriage was then being treated of), I saw her appear in the procession more beautiful than ever, because, besides the beauty of her face and form, she was most superbly adorned and apparelled; her pure white face, resembling the skies in their serenity, was adorned about the head with quantities of pearls and jewels, especially brilliant diamonds, worn in the form of stars, so that the calm of the face and the sparkling jewels made one

think of the heavens when starry. Her beautiful body with its full, tall form was robed in a gown of crinkled cloth of gold, the richest and most beautiful ever seen in France. This stuff was a gift made by the Grand Signior to M. de Grand-Champ, our ambassador, on his departure from Constantinople, — it being the Grand Signior's custom to present to those who are sent to him a piece of the said stuff amounting to fifteen ells, which, so Grand-Champ told me, cost one hundred crowns the ell; for it was indeed a masterpiece. He, on coming to France and not knowing how to employ more worthily the gift of so rich a stuff, gave it to Madame, the sister of the king, who made a gown of it, and wore it first on the said occasion, when it became her well — for from one grandeur to another there is only a hand's breadth. She wore it all that day, although its weight was heavy; but her beautiful, rich, strong figure supported it well and served it to advantage; for had she been a little shrimp of a princess, or a dame only elbow-high (as I have seen some), she would surely have died of the weight, or else have been forced to change her gown and take another.

That is not all: being in the procession and walking in her rank, her visage uncovered, not to deprive the people of so good a feast, she seemed more beautiful still by holding and bearing in her hand her palm (as our queens of all time have done) with royal majesty and a grace half proud half sweet, and a manner little common and so different from all the rest that whoso had seen her would have said: "Here is a princess who goes above the run of all things in the world." And we courtiers went about saying, with one voice boldly, that she did well to bear a palm in her hand, for she bore it away from others; surpassing them all in beauty, in grace, and in perfection. And I swear to you that in that procession we forgot our devotions, and did not

make them while contemplating and admiring that divine princess, who ravished us more than divine service; and yet we thought we committed no sin; for whoso contemplates divinity on earth does not offend the divinity of heaven; inasmuch as He made her such.

When the queen, her mother, took her from Court to meet her husband in Gascoigne, I saw how all the courtiers grieved at her departure as though a great calamity had fallen on their heads. Some said: "The Court is widowed of her beauty;" others: "The Court is gloomy, it has lost its sun;" others again: "How dark it is; we have no torch." And some cried out: "Why should Gascoigne come here gascoigning to steal our beauty, destined to adorn all France and the Court, Fontainebleau, Saint-Germain, the hôtel du Louvre, and all the other noble places of our kings, to lodge her at Pau and Nérac, places so unlike the others?" But many said: "The deed is done; the Court and France have lost the loveliest flower of their garland."

In short, on all sides did we hear resound such little speeches upon this departure, — half in vexed anger, half in sadness, — although Queen Louise de Lorraine remained behind, who was a very handsome and wise princess, and virtuous (of whom I hope to speak more worthily in her place); but for so long the Court had been accustomed to that beauteous sight it could not keep from grieving and proffering such words. Some there were who would have liked to kill M. de Duras, who came from his master the King of Navarre to obtain her; and this I know.

Once there came news to Court that she was dead in Auvergne some eight days. On which a person whom I met said to me: "That cannot be, for since that time the sky is clear and fine; if she were dead we should have

seen eclipse of sun, because of the great sympathy two suns must have, and nothing could be seen but gloom and clouds."

Enough has now been said, methinks, upon the beauty of her body, though the subject is so ample that it deserves a decade. I hope to speak of it again, but at present I must say something of her noble soul, which is lodged so well in that noble body. If it was born thus noble within her she has known how to keep it and maintain it so; for she loves letters much and reading. While young, she was, for her age, quite perfect in them; so that we could say of her: This princess is truly the most eloquent and best-speaking lady in the world, with the finest style of speech and the most agreeable to be found. When the Poles, as I have said before, came to do her reverence they brought with them the Bishop of Cracovie, the chief and head of the embassy, who made the harangue in Latin, he being a learned and accomplished prelate. The queen replied so pertinently and eloquently without the help of an interpreter, having well understood and comprehended the harangue, that all were struck with admiration, calling her with one voice a second Minerva, goddess of eloquence.

When the queen her mother took her to the king her husband, as I have said, she made her entry to Bordeaux, as was proper, being daughter and sister of a king, and wife of the King of Navarre, first prince of the blood, and governor of Guyenne. The queen her mother willed it so, for she loved and esteemed her much. This entry was fine; not so much for the sumptuous magnificence there made and displayed, as for the triumph of this most beautiful and accomplished queen of the world, mounted on a fine white horse superbly caparisoned; she herself dressed all in orange and spangles, so sumptuously as never was; so that

none could get their surfeit of looking at her, admiring and lauding her to the skies.

Before she entered, the State assembly of the town came to do reverence and offer their means and powers, and to harangue her at the Chartreux, as is customary. M. de Bordeaux [the bishop] spoke for the clergy; M. le Maréchal de Biron, as mayor, wearing his robes of office, for the town, and for himself as lieutenant-general afterwards; also M. Largebaston, chief president for the courts of law. She answered them all, one after the other (for I heard her, being close beside her on the scaffold, by her command), so eloquently, so wisely and promptly and with such grace and majesty, even changing her words to each, without reiterating the first or the second, although upon the same subject (which is a thing to be remarked upon), that when I saw that evening the said president he said to me, and to others in the queen's chamber, that he had never in his life heard better speech from any one; and that he understood such matters, having had the honour to hear the two queens, Marguerite and Jeanne, her predecessors, speak at the like ceremonies, — they having had in their day the most golden-speaking lips in France (those were the words he used to me); and yet they were but novices and apprentices compared to her, who truly was her mother's daughter.

I repeated to the queen, her mother, this that the president had said to me, of which she was glad as never was; and told me that he had reason to think and say so, for, though she was her daughter, she could call her, without falsehood, the most accomplished princess in the world, able to say exactly what she wished to say the best. And in like manner I have heard and seen ambassadors, and great foreign seigneurs, after they had spoken with her, depart confounded by her noble speech.

I have often heard her make such fine discourse, so grave and so sententious, that could I put it clearly and correctly here in writing I should delight and amaze the world; but it is not possible; nor could any one transcribe her words, so inimitable are they.

But if she is grave, and full of majesty and eloquence in her high and serious discourses, she is just as full of charming grace in gay and witty speech; jesting so prettily, with give and take, that her company is most agreeable; for, though she pricks and banters others, 't is all so *à propos* and excellently said that no one can be vexed, but only glad of it.

But further: if she knows how to speak, she knows also how to write; and the beautiful letters we have seen from her attest it. They are the finest, the best couched, whether they be serious or familiar, and such that the greatest writers of the past and present may hide their heads and not produce their own when hers appear; for theirs are trifles near to hers. No one, having read them, would fail to laugh at Cicero with his familiar letters. And whoso would collect Queen Marguerite's letters, together with her discourses, would make a school and training for the world; and no one should feel surprised at this, for, in herself, her mind is sound and quick, with great information, wise and solid. She is a queen in all things, and deserves to rule a mighty kingdom, even an empire, — about which I shall make the following digression, all the more because it has to do with the present subject.

When her marriage was granted at Blois to the King of Navarre, difficulties were made by Queen Jeanne [d'Albret, Henri IV.'s mother], very different then from what she wrote to my mother, who was her lady of honour, and at this time sick in her own house. I have read the letter, writ by her own hand, in the archives of our house; it says thus: —



Henri IV

"I write you this, my great friend, to rejoice and give you health with the good news my husband sends me. He having had the boldness to ask of the king Madame, his young daughter, for our son, the king has done him the honour to grant it; for which I cannot tell you the happiness I have."

There is much to be said thereon. At this time there was at our Court a lady whom I shall not name, as silly as she could be. Being with the queen-mother one evening at her *coucher*, the queen inquired of her ladies if they had seen her daughter, and whether she seemed joyful at the granting of her marriage. This silly lady, who did not yet know her Court, answered first and said: "How, madame, should she not be joyful at such a marriage, inasmuch as it will lead to the crown and make her some day Queen of France, when it falls to her future husband, as it well may do in time." The queen, hearing so strange a speech, replied: "*Ma mie*, you are a great fool. I would rather die a thousand deaths than see your foolish prophecy accomplished; for I hope and wish long life and good prosperity to the king, my son, and all my other children." On which a very great lady, one of her intimates, inquired: "But, madame, in case that great misfortune — from which God keep us! — happens, would you not be very glad to see your daughter Queen of France, inasmuch as the crown would fall to her by right through that of her husband?" To which the queen made answer: "Much as I love this daughter, I think, if that should happen, we should see France much tried with evils and misfortunes. I would rather die (as she did in fact) than see her in that position; for I do not believe that France would obey the King of Navarre as it does my sons, for many reasons which I do not tell."

Behold two prophecies accomplished: one, that of the foolish lady, the other, but only till her death, that of the able

princess. The latter prophecy has failed to-day, by the grace which God has given our king [Henri IV.], and by the force of his good sword and the valour of his brave heart, which have made him so great, so victorious, so feared, and so absolute a king as he is to-day after too many toils and hindrances. May God preserve him by His holy grace in such prosperity, for we need him much, we his poor subjects.

The queen said further: "If by the abolition of the Salic law, the kingdom should come to my daughter in her own right, as other kingdoms have fallen to the distaff, certainly my daughter is as capable of reigning, or more so, as most men and kings whom I have known; and I think that her reign would be a fine one, equal to that of the king her grandfather and that of the king her father, for she has a great mind and great virtues for doing that thing." And thereupon she went on to say how great an abuse was the Salic law, and that she had heard M. le Cardinal de Lorraine say that when he arranged the peace between the two kings with the other deputies in the abbey of Cercan, a dispute came up on a point of the Salic law touching the succession of women to the kingdom of France; and M. le Cardinal de Grandvelle, otherwise called d'Arras, rebuked the said Cardinal de Lorraine, declaring that the Salic law was a veritable abuse, which old dreamers and chroniclers had written down, without knowing why, and so made it accepted; although, in fact, it was never made or decreed in France, and was only a custom that Frenchmen had given each other from hand to hand, and so introduced; whereas it was not just, and, consequently, was violable.

Thus said the queen-mother. And, when all is said, it was Pharamond, as most people hold, who brought it from his own country and introduced it in France; and we certainly ought not to observe it, because he was a pagan; and

to keep so strictly among us Christians the laws of a pagan is an offence against God. It is true that most of our laws come from pagan emperors; but those which are holy, just, and equitable (and truly there are many), we ourselves have ruled by them. But the Salic law of Pharamond is unjust and contrary to the law of God, for it is written in the Old Testament, in the twenty-seventh chapter of Numbers: "If a man die and have no son ye shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter." This sacred law demands, therefore, that females shall inherit after males. Besides, if Scripture were taken at its word on this Salic law, there would be no such great harm done, as I have heard great personages say, for they speak thus: "So long as there be males, females can neither inherit nor reign. Consequently, in default of males, females should do so. And, inasmuch as it is legal in Spain, Navarre, England, Scotland, Hungary, Naples, and Sicily that females should reign, why should it not be the same in France? For what is right in one place is right everywhere and in all places; places do not make the justice of the law."

In all the fiefs we have in France, duchies, counties, baronies, and other honourable lordships, which are nearly and even greatly royal in their rights and privileges, many women, married and unmarried, have succeeded; as in Bourbon, Vendôme, Montpensier, Nevers, Rhétel, Flandres, Eu, Bourgogne, Artois, Zellande, Bretaigne; and even like Mathilde, who was Duchesse de Normandie; Eléonore, Duchesse de Guyenne, who enriched Henry II., King of England; Béatrix, Comtesse de Provence, who brought that province to King Louis, her husband; the only daughter of Raimond, Comtesse de Thoulouse, who brought Thoulouse to Alfonse, brother of Saint-Louis; also Anne, Duchesse de Bretaigne, and others. Why, therefore, should not the king-

dom of France call to itself in like manner the daughters of France?

Did not the beautiful Galatea rule in Gaul when Hercules married her after his conquest of Spain? — from which marriage issued our brave, valiant, generous Gauls, who in the olden time made themselves laudable.

Why should the daughters of dukes in this kingdom be more capable of governing a duchy or a county and administering justice (which is the duty of kings) than the daughters of kings to rule the kingdom of France? As if the daughters of France were not as capable and fitted to command and reign as those of other kingdoms and fiefs that I have named!

For still greater proof of the iniquity of the Salic law it is enough to show that so many chroniclers, writers, and praters, who have all written about it, have never yet agreed among themselves as to its etymology and definition. Some, like Postel, consider that it takes its ancient name and origin from the Gauls, and is only called Salic instead of Gallic because of the proximity and likeness in old type between the letter S and the letter G. But Postel is as visionary in that (as a great personage said to me) as he is in other things.

Jean Ceval, Bishop of Avranches, a great searcher into the antiquities of Gaul and France, tried to trace it to the word *salle*, because this law was ordained only for *salles* and royal palaces.

Claude Seissel thinks, rather inappropriately, that it comes from the word *sal* in Latin, as a law full of salt, that of sapience, wisdom, a metaphor drawn from salt.

A doctor of laws, named Ferrarius Montanus, will have it that Pharamond was otherwise called Salicq. Others derive it from Sallogast, one of the principal councillors of Pharamond.

Others again, wishing to be still more subtle, say that the derivation is taken from the frequent sections in the said law beginning with the words: *si aliquis, si aliqua.* But some say it comes from François Saliens; and it is so mentioned in Marcellin.[1]

So here are many puzzles and musings; and it is not to be wondered at that the Bishop of Arras disputed the matter with the Cardinal de Lorraine: just as those of his nation in their jests and jugglings, supposing that this law was a new invention, called Philippe de Valois *le roi trouvé,* as if, by a new right never recognized before in France, he had made himself king. On which was founded that, the county of Flanders having fallen to a distaff, King Charles V. of France did not claim any right or title to it; on the contrary, he portioned his brother Philippe with Bourgogne in order to make his marriage with the Countess of Flanders; not wishing to take her for himself, thinking her less beautiful, though far more rich, than her of Bourbon. Which is a great proof and assurance that the Salic law was not observed except as to the crown. And it cannot be doubted that women, could they come to the throne, beautiful, honourable, and virtuous as the one of whom I here speak, would draw to them the hearts of their subjects by their beauty and sweetness far more than men do by their strength.

M. du Tillet says that Queen Clotilde made France accept the Christian religion, and since then no queen has ever wandered from it; which is a great honour to queens, for it was not so with the kings after Clovis; Chilperic I. was stained with Arian error, and was checked only by

[1] The Salic law: so called from being derived from the laws of the ancient Salian Franks, — according to Stormonth, Littré, and Cassell's Cyclopædia. — Tr.

the firm resistance of two prelates of the Gallican church, according to the statement of Grégoire de Tours.

Moreover, was not Catherine, daughter of Charles VI., ordained Queen of France by the king, her father, and his council [in 1420] ?

Du Tillet further says that the daughters of France were held in such honour that although they were married to less than kings they nevertheless kept their royal titles and were called queens with their proper names; an honour which was given them for life to demonstrate forever that they were daughters of the kings of France. This ancient custom shows dumbly that the daughters of France can be sovereigns as well as the sons.

In the days of the King Saint-Louis it is recorded of a court of peers held by him that the Countess of Flanders was present, taking part with the peers. This shows how the Salic law was not kept, except as to the crown. Let us see still further what M. du Tillet says: —

"By the Salic law, written for all subjects, where there were no sons the daughters inherited the patrimony; and this should rule the crown also, so that Mesdames the daughters of France, in default of sons, should take it; nevertheless, they are perpetually excluded by custom and the private law of the house of France, based on the arrogance of Frenchmen, who cannot endure to be governed by women." And elsewhere he says: "One cannot help being amazed at the long ignorance that has attributed this custom to the Salic law, which is quite the contrary of it."

King Charles V., treating of the marriage of Queen Marie of France, his daughter, with Guillaume, Count of Hainault, in the year 1374, stipulated for the renunciation by the said count of all right to the kingdom and to Dauphiné; which is a great point, for see the contradictions !

Certainly if women could handle arms like men they could make themselves accredited; but by way of compensation, they have their beautiful faces; which, however, are not recognized as they deserve; for surely it is better to be governed by beautiful, lovely, and honourable women than by tiresome, conceited, ugly, and sullen men such as I have seen in this France of ours.

I would like to know if this kingdom has found itself any better for an infinitude of conceited, silly, tyrannical, foolish, do-nothing, idiotic, and crazy kings — not meaning to accuse our brave Pharamond, Clodion, Clovis, Pépin, Martel, Charles, Louis, Philippe, Jean, François, Henri, for they are all brave and magnanimous, those kings, and happy they who were under them — than it would have been with an infinitude of the daughters of France, very able, very prudent, and very worthy to govern. I appeal to the regency of the mothers of kings to show this, to wit: —

Frédégonde, how did she administer the affairs of France during the minority of King Clothaire, her son, if not so wisely and dexterously that he found himself before he died monarch of Gaul and of much of Germany?

The like did Mathilde, wife of Dagobert, as to Clovis II., her son; and, long after, Blanche, mother of Saint-Louis, who behaved so wisely, as I have read, that, just as the Roman emperors chose to call themselves "Augustus" in commemoration of the luck and prosperity of Augustus, the great emperor, so the former queen-mothers after the decease of the kings, their husbands, desired each to be called "Reine Blanche," in honourable memory of the government of that wise princess. Though M. du Tillet contradicts this a little, I have heard it from a very great senator.

And, to come lower down, Isabeau of Bavaria had the regency of her husband, Charles VI. (who lost his good

sense), by the advice of the Council; and so had Madame de Bourbon for little King Charles VIII. during his minority; Madame Louise de Savoie for King François I.; and our queen-mother for King Charles IX., her son.

If, therefore, foreign ladies (except Madame de Bourbon, who was daughter of France) were capable of governing France so well, why should not our own ladies do as much, having good zeal and affection, they being born here and suckled here, and the matter touching them so closely?

I should like to know in what our last kings have surpassed our last three daughters of France, Élisabeth, Claude, and Marguerite; and whether if the latter had come to be queens of France they would not have governed it (I do not wish to accuse the regency, which was very great and very wise) as well as their brothers. I have heard many great personages, well-informed and far-seeing, say that possibly we should not have had the evils we did have, now have, and shall have still; adducing reasons too long to put here. But the common and vulgar fool says: "Must observe the Salic law." Poor idiot that he is! does he not know that the Germans, from whose stock we issued, were wont to call their women to affairs of State, as we learn from Tacitus? From that, we can see how this Salic law has been corrupted. It is but mere custom; and poor women, unable to enforce their rights by the point of the sword, men have excluded, and driven them from everything. Ah! why have we no more brave and valiant paladins of France,—a Roland, a Renaud, an Ogier, a Deudon, an Olivier, a Graffon, an Yvon, and an infinity of other braves, whose glory and profession it was to succour ladies and support them in the troubles and adversities of their lives, their honour, and their fortunes? Why are they here no longer to maintain the rights of our Queen Marguerite, daughter of France, who barely enjoys

an inch of land in France, which she quitted in noble state, though to her, perhaps, the whole belongs by right divine and human? Queen Marguerite, who does not even enjoy her county of Auvergne, which is hers by law and equity as the sole heiress of the queen, her mother, is now withdrawn into the castle of Usson, amid the deserts, rocks, and mountains of Auvergne, — a different habitation, verily, from the great city of Paris, where she ought now to be seated on her throne and place of justice, which belongs to her in her own right as well as by that of her husband. But the misfortune is that they are not there together. If both were again united in body and soul and friendship, as they once were, possibly all would go right once more, and together they would be feared, respected, and known for what they are.

(Since this was written God has willed that they be reconciled, which is indeed great luck.)

I heard M. de Pibrac say on one occasion that these Navarre marriages are fatal, because husband and wife are always at variance, — as was the case with Louis Hutin, King of France and of Navarre, and Marguerite de Bourgogne, daughter of Duc Robert III.; also Philippe le Long, King of France and Navarre, with Jeanne, daughter of Comte Othelin of Bourgogne, who, being found innocent, was vindicated well; also Charles le Bel, King of France and of Navarre, with Blanche, daughter of Othelin, another Comte de Bourgogne; and further, King Henri d'Albret with Marguerite de Valois, who, as I have heard on good authority, treated her very ill, and would have done worse had not King François, her brother, spoken sternly to him and threatened him for honouring his sister so little, considering the rank she held.

The last King Antoine of Navarre died also on ill terms with Queen Jeanne, his wife; and our Queen Marguerite is

now in dispute and separation from her husband; but God will some day happily unite them in spite of these evil times.

I have heard a princess say that Queen Marguerite saved her husband's life on the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew; for indubitably he was proscribed and his name written on the "red paper," as it was called, because it was necessary, they said, to tear up the roots, namely, the King of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, Amiral de Coligny, and other great personages; but the said Queen Marguerite flung herself on her knees before King Charles, to implore him for the life of her husband and lord.[1] King Charles would scarcely grant it to her, although she was his good sister. I relate this for what it is worth, as I know it only by hearsay. But she bore this massacre very impatiently and saved several, among them a Gascon gentleman (I think his name was Léran), who, wounded as he was, took refuge beneath her bed, she being in it, and the murderers pursuing him to the door, from which she drove them; for she was never cruel, but kind, like a daughter of France.

They say that the quarrel between herself and her husband came more from the difference in their religion than from anything else; for they each loved his and her own, and supported it strongly. The queen having gone to Pau, the chief town of Béarn, she caused the mass to be said there; and a certain secretary of the king, her husband, named le Pin, who had formerly belonged to M. l'Amiral, not being able to stomach it, put several of the inhabitants of the town who had been present at the mass into prison. The queen was much displeased; and he, wishing to remonstrate, spoke to her much louder than he should, and very indiscreetly, even

[1] Marguerite was married to Henri, King of Navarre, six days before the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, August, 1572.

before the king, who gave him a good rebuke and dismissed him; for King Henri knows well how to like and respect what he ought; being as brave and generous as his fine and noble actions have always manifested; of which I shall speak at length in his life.

The said le Pin fell back upon the edict which is there made, and to be observed under penalty, namely, that mass shall not be said. The queen, feeling herself insulted, and God knows she was, vowed and declared she would never again set foot in that country because she chose to be free in the exercise of her religion; whereupon she departed, and has ever since kept her oath very carefully.

I have heard it said that nothing lay so heavily on her heart as this indignity of being deprived of the exercise of her religion; for which reason she begged the queen, her good mother, to come and fetch her and take her to France to see the king and Monsieur, his brother, whom she honoured and loved much. Having arrived, she was not received and seen by the king, her brother, as she should have been. Seeing this great change since she had left France, and the rise of many persons she would never have thought of to grandeurs, it irked her much to be forced to pay court to them, as others, her equals, were now doing; and far from doing so herself, she despised them openly, as I well saw, so high was her courage. Alas! too high, certainly, for it caused her misfortunes; had she been willing to restrain herself and lower her courage the least in the world she would not have been thwarted and vexed as she has been.

As to which I shall relate this story: when the king, her brother, went to Poland, he being there, she knew that M. du Gua, much favoured by her brother, had made some remarks to her disadvantage, enough to set brother and sister at variance or enmity. At the end of a certain time M. du

Gua returned from Poland and arrived at Court, bearing letters from the king to his sister, which he went to her apartment to give her and kiss hands. This I saw myself. When she beheld him enter she was in great wrath, and as he came to her to present the letter she said to him, with an angry face: "Lucky for you, du Gua, that you come before me with this letter from my brother, which serves you as a safeguard, for I love him much and all who come from him are free from me; but without it, I would teach you to speak about a princess like myself, the sister of your kings, your masters and sovereigns." M. du Gua answered very humbly: "I should never, madame, have presented myself before you, knowing that you wish me ill, without some good message from the king, my master, who loves you, and whom you love also; or without feeling assured, madame, that for love of him, and because you are good and generous, you would hear me speak." And then, after making her his excuses and telling his reasons (as he knew well how to do), he denied very positively that he had ever spoken against the sister of his kings otherwise than very reverently. On which she dismissed him with an assurance that she would ever be his cruel enemy, — a promise which she kept until his death.

After a while the king wrote to Mme. de Dampierre and begged her, for the sake of giving him pleasure, to induce the Queen of Navarre to pardon M. du Gua, which Mme. de Dampierre undertook with very great regret, knowing well the nature of the said queen; but because the king loved her and trusted her, she took the errand and went one day to see the said queen in her room. Finding her in pretty good humour, she opened the matter and made the appeal, namely: that to keep the good graces, friendship, and favour of the king, her brother, who was now about to become

King of France, she ought to pardon M. du Gua, forget the past, and take him again into favour; for the king loved and favoured him above his other friends; and by thus taking M. du Gua as a friend she would gain through him many pleasures and good offices, inasmuch as he quietly governed the king, his master, and it was much better to have his help than to make him desperate and goad him against her, because he could surely do her much harm; telling her how she had seen in her time during the reign of François I., Mesdames Madeleine and Marguerite, one Queen of Scotland later, the other Duchesse de Savoie, her aunts, although their hearts were as high and lofty as her own, bring down their pride so low as to pay court to M. de Sourdis, who was only master of the wardrobe to the king, their father; yet they even sought him, hoping by his means, to obtain the favour of the king; and thus, taking example by her aunts, she ought to do the same herself in relation to M. du Gua.

The Queen of Navarre, having listened very attentively to Mme. de Dampierre, answered her rather coldly, but with a smiling face, as her manner was: "Madame de Dampierre, what you say to me may be good for you; you need favours, pleasures, and benefits, and were I you the words you say to me might be very suitable and proper to be received and put in practice; but to me, who am the daughter of a king, the sister of kings, and the wife of a king, they have no meaning; because with that high and noble rank I cannot, for my honour's sake, be a beggar of favours and benefits from the king, my brother; and I hold him to be of too good a nature and too well acquainted with his duty to deny me anything unless I have the favour of a du Gua; if otherwise, he will do great wrong to himself, his honour, and his royalty. And even if he be so unnatural as to forget himself and what he

owes to me, I prefer, for my honour's sake and as my courage tells me, to be deprived of his good graces, because I would not seek du Gua to gain his favours, or be even suspected of gaining them by such means and intercession; and if the king, my brother, feels himself worthy to be king, and to be loved by me and by his people, I feel myself, as his sister, worthy to be queen and loved, not only by him but by all the world. And if my aunts, as you allege, degraded themselves as you say, let them do as they would if such was their humour, but their example is no law to me, nor will I imitate it, or form myself on any model if not my own." On that she was silent, and Mme. de Dampierre retired; not that the queen was angry with her or showed her ill-will, for she loved her much.

Another time, when M. d'Épernon went to Gascoigne after the death of Monsieur (a journey made for various purposes, so they said), he saw the King of Navarre at Pamiers, and they made great cheer and caresses to each other. I speak thus because at that time M. d'Épernon was semi-king of France because of the dissolute favour he had with his master, the King of France. After having caressed and made good cheer together the King of Navarre asked him to go and see him at Nérac when he had been to Toulouse and was on his way back; which he promised to do. The King of Navarre having gone there first to make preparations to feast him well, the Queen of Navarre, who was then at Nérac, and who felt a deadly hatred to M. d'Épernon, said to the king, her husband, that she would leave the place so as not to disturb or hinder the fête, not being able to endure the sight of M. d'Épernon without some scandal or venom of anger which she might disgorge, and so give annoyance to the king, her husband. On which the king begged her, by all the pleasures that she could give

him, not to stir, but to help him to receive the said Sieur d'Épernon and to put her rancour against him underfoot for love of him, her husband, and all the more because it greatly concerned both of them and their grandeur.

"Well, monsieur," replied the queen, "since you are pleased to command it, I will remain and give him good cheer out of respect to you and the obedience that I owe to you." After which she said to some of her ladies: "But I will answer for it that on the days that man is here I will dress in habiliments I never yet have worn, namely: dissimulation and hypocrisy; I will so mask my face with shams that the king shall see there only good and honest welcome and all gentleness; and likewise I will lay discretion on my lips, so that externally I will make him think my heart internally is kind, which otherwise I would not answer for; I do this being nowise in my own control, but wholly in his, — so lofty is he and full of frankness, unable to bear vileness or the venom of hypocrisy, or to abase himself in any way.

Therefore, to content the king, her husband, for she honoured him much, as he did her, she disguised her feelings in such a way that, M. d'Épernon being brought to her apartment, she received him in the same manner the king had asked of her and she had promised; so that all present, the chamber being full of persons eager to see the entrance and the interview, marvelled much, while the king and M. d'Épernon were quite content. But the most clear-sighted and those who knew the nature of the queen misdoubted something hidden within; and she herself said afterwards it was a comedy in which she played a part unwillingly.

These are two tales by which to see the lofty courage of this queen, the which was such, as I have heard the queen,

her mother, say (discoursing of this topic), that she resembled in this her father; and that she, the queen-mother, had no other child so like him, as much in ways, humours, lineaments, and features of the face as in courage and generosity; telling also how she had seen King Henri during King François' lifetime unable for a kingdom to pay his court and cringe to Cardinal de Tournon or to Amiral d'Annebault, the favourites of King François, even though he might often have had peace with Emperor Charles had he been willing so to do; but his honour could not submit to such attentions. And so, like father, like daughter. Nevertheless, all that injured her much. I remember an infinite number of annoyances and indignities she received at Court, which I shall not relate, they are too odious; until at last she was sent away, with great affront and yet most innocent of what they put upon her; the proofs of which were known to many, as I know myself; also the king, her husband, was convinced of it, so that he brought King Henri to account, which was very good of him, and henceforth there resulted between the two brothers [-in-law] a certain hatred and contention.

The war of the League happened soon after; and because the Queen of Navarre feared some evil at Court, being a strong Catholic, she retired to Agen, which had been given to her with the region about it by her brothers, as an appanage and gift for life. As the Catholic religion was concerned, which it was necessary to maintain, and also to exterminate the other, she wished to fortify her side as best she could and repress the other side. But in this she was ill-served by means of Mme. de Duras, who governed her much, and made, in her name, great exactions and extortions. The people of the town were embittered, and covertly sought their freedom and a means to drive away their lady

and her bailiffs. On which disturbance the Maréchal de Matignon took occasion to make enterprise against the town, as the king, having learned the state of things, commanded him with great joy to do in order to aggravate his sister, whom he did not love, to more and more displeasure. This enterprise, which failed at first, was led the second time so dexterously by the said marshal and the inhabitants, that the town was taken by force with such rapidity and alarm that the poor queen, in spite of all she could do, was forced to mount in pillion behind a gentleman, and Mme. de Duras behind another, and escape as quickly as they could, riding a dozen leagues without stopping, and the next day as much more, to find safety in the strongest fortress of France, which is Carlat. Being there, and thinking herself in safety, she was, by the manœuvres of the king, her brother (who was a very clever and very subtle king, if ever there was one), betrayed by persons of that country and the fortress, so that when she fled she became a prisoner in the hands of the Marquis de Canillac, governor of Auvergne, and was taken to the castle of Usson, a very strong fortress also, almost impregnable, which that good and sly fox Louis XI. had made such, in order to lodge his prisoners in a hundred-fold more security than at Loches, Bois de Vincennes, or Lusignan.

Here, then, was this poor princess a prisoner, and treated not as a daughter of France or the great princess that she was. But, at any rate, if her body was captive, her brave heart was not, and it never failed her, but helped her well and did not let her yield to her affliction. See what a great heart can do, led by great beauty! For he who held her prisoner became her prisoner in time, brave and valiant though he was. Poor man! what else could he expect? Did he think to hold subject and captive in his prison one

whose eyes and beauteous face could subject the whole world to her bonds and chains like galley-slaves!

So here was the marquis ravished and taken by her beauty; but she, not dreaming of the delights of love, only of her honour and her liberty, played her game so shrewdly that she soon became the stronger, seized the fort, and drove away the marquis, much dumfounded at such surprise and military tactics.

There she has now been six or seven years,[1] not, however, with all the pleasures of life, being despoiled of the county of Auvergne by M. le Grand Prieur de France, whom the king induced the queen-mother to institute count and heir in her will; regretting much that she could not leave the queen, her good daughter, anything of her own, so great was the hatred that the king bore her. Alas! what mutation was this from the time when, as I saw myself, they loved each other much, and were one in body, soul, and will! Ah! how often was it fine to see them discourse together; for, whether they were grave or gay, nothing could be finer than to see and hear them, for both could say what they wished to say. Ah! how changed the times are since we saw them in that great ball-room, dancing together in such beautiful accord of dance and will! The king always led her to the dance at the great balls. If one had a noble majesty the other had none the less; the eyes of all were never surfeited or delighted enough by so agreeable a sight; for the sets were so well danced, the steps so correctly performed, the stops so finely made that we knew not which to admire most, their beautiful fashion of dancing or their majesty in pausing; representing now a gay demeanour and next a noble, grave

1 Marguerite lived eighteen years in the castle of Usson, from 1587 to 1605. She died in Paris, March 27, 1615, at the age of sixty-two, rather less than one year after Brantôme. (French editor.)



Elisabeth of France.
Queen of Spain

disdain; for no one ever saw them in the dance that did not say they had seen no dance so fine with grace and majesty as this of the king-brother and the queen-sister. As for me, I am of that opinion; and yet I have seen the Queen of Spain and the Queen of Scotland dance most beautifully.

Also I have seen them dance the Italian *pazzemeno* [the minuet, *menu pas*], now advancing with grave port and majesty, doing their steps so gravely and so well; next gliding only; and anon making most fine and dainty and grave passages, that none, princes or others, could approach, nor ladies, because of the majesty that was not lacking. Wherefore this queen took infinite pleasure in these grave dances on account of her grace and dignity and majesty, which she displayed the better in these than in others like *bransles*, and *volts*, and *courants*. The latter she did not like, although she danced them well, because they were not worthy of her majesty, though very proper for the common graces of other ladies.

I have seen her sometimes like to dance the *bransle* by torchlight. I remember that once, being at Lyon, on the return of the king from Poland, at the marriage of Besne (one of her maids of honour) she danced the *bransle* before many foreigners from Savoie, Piedmont, Italy, and elsewhere, who declared they had never seen anything so fine as this queen, a grave and noble lady, as indeed she is. One of them there was who went about declaring that she needed not, like other ladies, the torch she carried in her hand; for the light within her eyes, which could not be extinguished like the other, was sufficient; the which had other virtue than leading men to dance, for it inflamed all those about her, yet could not be put out like the one she had in hand, but lit the night amid the darkness and the day beneath the sun.

For this reason must we say that Fortune has been to us as great an enemy as to her, in that we see no longer that bright torch, or rather that fine sun which lighted us, now hidden among those hills and mountains of Auvergne. If only that light had placed itself in some fine port or haven near the sea, where passing mariners might be guided, safe from wreck and peril, by its beacon, her dwelling would be nobler, more profitable, more honourable for herself and us. Ah! people of Provence, you ought to beg her to dwell upon your seacoasts or within your ports; then would she make them more famous than they are, more inhabited and richer; from all sides men in galleys, ships, and vessels would flock to see this wonder of the world, as in old times to that of Rhodes, that they might see its glorious and far-shining pharos. Instead of which, begirt by barriers of mountains, she is hidden and unknown to all our eyes, except that we have still her lovely memory. Ah! beautiful and ancient town of Marseille, happy would you be if your port were honoured by the flame and beacon of her splendid eyes! For the county of Provence belongs to her, as do several other provinces in France. Cursèd be the unhappy obstinacy of this kingdom which does not seek to bring her hither with the king, her husband, to be received, honoured and welcomed as they should be. (This I wrote at the very height of the Wars of the League.)

Were she a bad, malicious, miserly, or tyrannical princess (as there have been a plenty in times past in France, and will be, possibly, again), I should say nothing in her favour; but she is good, most splendid, liberal, giving all to others, keeping little for herself, most charitable, and giving freely to the poor. The great she made ashamed with liberalities; for I have seen her make presents to all the Court on New Year's Day such as the kings, her brothers, could not equal.

On one occasion she gave Queen Louise de Lorraine a fan made of mother-of-pearl enriched with precious stones and pearls of price, so beautiful and rich that it was called a masterpiece and valued at more than fifteen thousand crowns. The other, to return the present, sent her sister those long *aiguillettes* which Spaniards call *puntas*, enriched with certain stones and pearls, that might have cost a hundred crowns; and with these she paid for that fine New Year's gift, which was, certainly, most dissimilar.

In short, this queen is in all things royal and liberal, honourable and magnificent, and, let it not displease the empresses of long past days, their splendours described by Suetonius, Pliny, and others, do not approach her own in any way, either in Court or city, or in her journeys through the open country; witness her gilded litters so superbly covered and painted with fine devices, her coaches and carriages the same, and her horses so fine and so richly caparisoned.

Those who have seen, as I have, these splendid appurtenances know what I say. And must she now be deprived of all this, so that for seven years she has not stirred from that stern, unpleasant castle? — in which, however, she takes patience; such virtue has she of self-command, one of the greatest, as many wise philosophers have said!

To speak once more of her kindness: it is such, so noble, so frank, that, as I believe, it has done her harm; for though she has had great grounds and great means to be revenged upon her enemies and injure them, she has often withheld her hand when, had she employed those means or caused them to be employed, and commanded others, who were ready enough, to chastise those enemies with her consent, they would have done so wisely and discreetly; but she resigned all vengeances to God.

This is what M. du Gua said to her once when she threatened him: "Madame, you are so kind and generous that I never heard it said you did harm to any one; and I do not think you will begin with me, who am your very humble servitor." And, in fact, although he greatly injured her, she never returned him the same in vengeance. It is true that when he was killed and they came to tell her, she merely said, being ill: "I am sorry I am not well enough to celebrate his death with joy." She had also this other kindness in her: that when others had humbled themselves and asked her pardon and favour, she forgave and pardoned, with the generosity of a lion which never does harm to those who are humble to him.

I remember that when M. le Maréchal de Biron was lieutenant of the king in Guyenne, war having broken out around him (possibly with his knowledge and intent), he went one day before Nérac, where the King and Queen of Navarre were living at that time. The marshal prepared his arquebusiers to attack, beginning with a skirmish. The King of Navarre brought out his own in person, and, in a doublet like any captain of adventurers, he held his ground so well that, having the best marksmen, nothing could prevail against him. By way of bravado the marshal let fly some cannon against the town, so that the queen, who had gone upon the ramparts to see the pastime, came near having her share in it, for a ball flew right beside her; which incensed her greatly, as much for the little respect Maréchal de Biron showed in braving her to her face, as because he had a special command from the king not to approach the war nearer than five hundred leagues to the Queen of Navarre, wherever she might be. The which command he did not observe on this occasion; for which she felt resentment and revenge against the marshal.

About a year and a half later she came to Court, where was the marshal, whom the king had recalled from Guyenne, fearing further disturbance; for the King of Navarre had threatened to make trouble if he were not recalled. The Queen of Navarre, resentful to the said marshal, took no notice of him, but disdained him, speaking everywhere very ill of him and of the insult he had offered her. At last, the marshal, dreading the hatred of the daughter and sister of his masters, and knowing the nature of the princess, determined to seek her pardon by making excuses and humbling himself; on which, generous as she was, she did not contradict him, but took him into favour and friendship and forgot the past. I knew a gentleman by acquaintance who came to Court about this time, and seeing the good cheer the queen bestowed upon the marshal was much astonished; and so, as he sometimes had the honour of being listened to by the queen, he said to her that he was much amazed at the change and at her good welcome, in which he could not have believed, in view of the affront and injury. To which she answered that as the marshal had owned his fault and made his excuses and sought her pardon humbly, she had granted it for that reason, and did not desire further talk about his bravado at Nérac. See how little vindictive this good princess is, — not imitating in this respect her grandmother, Queen Anne, towards the Maréchal de Gié, as I have heretofore related.

I might give many other examples of her kindness in her reconciliations and forgivenesses.

Rebours, one of her maids of honour, who died at Chenonceaux, displeased her on one occasion very much. She did not treat her harshly, but when she was very ill she went to see her, and as she was about to die admonished her, and then said: " This poor girl has done great harm, but she has

suffered much. May God pardon her as I have pardoned her." That was the vengeance and the harm she did her. Through her generosity she was slow to revenge, and in all things kind.

Alfonso, the great King of Naples, who was subtle in loving the beauties of women, used to say that beauty is the sign manual of kindness and gentle goodness, as the beautiful flower is that of a good fruit. As to that it cannot be doubted that if our queen had been ugly and not composed of her great beauty, she would have been very bad in view of the great causes to be so that were given her. Thus said the late Queen Isabella of Castile, that wise and virtuous and very Catholic princess: "The fruit of clemency in a queen of great beauty and lofty heart, covetous of honour, is sweeter far than any vengeance whatever, even though it be undertaken for just claims and reason."

This queen most sacredly observes that rule, striving to conform to the commandments of her God, whom she has always loved and feared and served devotedly. Now that the world has abandoned her and made war upon her, she takes her sole resource in God, whom she serves daily, as I am told by those who have seen her in her affliction; for never does she miss a mass, taking the communion often and reading much in Holy Scripture, finding there her peace and consolation.

She is most eager to obtain the fine new books that are composed, as much on sacred subjects as on human; and when she undertakes to read a book, however large and long it be, she never stops or quits it until she sees the end, and often loses sleep and food in doing so. She herself composes, both in prose and verse. As to which no one can think otherwise than that her compositions are learned, beautiful, and pleasing, for she knows the art; and could we bring

them to the light, the world would draw great pleasure and great profit from them. Often she makes very beautiful verses and stanzas, that are sung to her by choir-boys whom she keeps, and which she sings herself (for her voice is beautiful and pleasant) to a lute, playing it charmingly. And thus she spends her time and wears away her luckless days, — offending none, and living that tranquil life she chooses as the best.

She has done me the honour to write me often in her adversity, I being so presumptuous as to send for news of her. But is she not the daughter and sister of my kings, and must I not wish to know her health, and be glad and happy when I hear 't is good? In her first letter she writes thus: —

"By the remembrance you have of me, which is not less new than pleasant to me, I see that you have well preserved the affection you have always shown to our family and to the few now left of its sad wreck, so that I, in whatever state I be, shall ever be disposed to serve you; feeling most happy that ill fortune has not effaced my name from the remembrance of my oldest friends, of whom you are. I know that you have chosen, like myself, a tranquil life; and I count those happy who can maintain it, as God has given me the grace to do these five years, He having brought me to an ark of safety, where the storms of all these troubles cannot, I thank God, hurt me; so that if there remain to me some means to serve my friends, and you particularly, you will find me wholly so disposed with right good will."

Those are noble words; and such was the state and resolution of our beautiful princess. That is what it is to be born of a noble house, the greatest in the world, whence she drew her courage by inheritance from many brave and valiant kings, her father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and all their

ancestors. And be it, as she says, that from so great a shipwreck she alone remains, not recognized and reverenced as she should be by her people, I believe this people of France has suffered much misery for that reason, and will suffer more for this war of the League. But to-day this is not so;[1] for by the valour and wisdom and fine government of our king never was France more flourishing, or more pacific, or better ruled; which is the greatest miracle ever seen, having issued from so vast an abyss of evils and corruptions; by which it seems that God has loved our queen, — He being good and merciful.

Oh! how ill-advised is he who trusts in the people of to-day! Oh! how differently did the Romans recognize the posterity of Augustus Cæsar, who gave them wealth and grandeurs, from the people of France, who received so much from their later kings these hundred years, and even from François I. and Henri II., so that without them France would have been tumbled topsy-turvy by her enemies watching for that chance, and even by the Emperor Charles, that hungry and ambitious man. And thus it is they are so ungrateful, these people, toward Marguerite, sole and only remaining daughter and princess of France! It is easy to foresee the wrath of God upon them, because nothing is to Him so odious as ingratitude, especially to kings and queens, who here below fulfil the place and state of God. And thou, disloyal Fortune, how plainly dost thou show that there are none, however loved by heaven and blessed by nature, who can be sure of thee and of thy favours a

[1] It is noticeable in the course of this "Discourse" that Brantôme wrote it at one period, namely, about 1593 or 1594, and reviewed it at another, when Henri IV. was in full possession of the kingdom, but before the end of the century and before the divorce. (French editor.)

The passage to which the foregoing is a note is evidently an addition to the text. — Tr.

single day! Art thou not dishonoured in thus so cruelly affronting her who is all beauty, sweetness, virtue, magnanimity and kindness?

All this I wrote during those wars we had among us for ten years. To make an end, did I not speak elsewhere of this great queen in other discourses I would lengthen this still more and all I could, for on so excellent a subject the longest words are never wearisome; but for a time I now postpone them.

Live, princess, live in spite of Fortune! Never can you be other than immortal upon earth and in heaven, whither your noble virtues bear you in their arms. If public voice and fame had not made common praise of your great merits, or if I were of those of noble speech, I would say further here; for never did there come into the world a figure so celestial.

This queen who should by good right order us
By laws and edicts and above us reign,
Till we behold a reign of pleasure under her,
As in her father's days, a Star of France,
Fortune hath hindered. Ha! must rightful claim
Be wrongly lost because of Fortune's spite?

Never did Nature make so fine a thing
As this great unique princess of our France!
Yet Fortune chooses to undo her wholly.
Behold how evil balances with good!

In the sixteenth century there were three Marguerites: one, sister of François I. and Queen of Navarre, celebrated for her intellect, her Tales in the style of Boccaccio, and her verses, which are less interesting; another, Marguerite, niece of the preceding, sister of Henri II., who became Duchesse de Savoie, very witty, also a writer of verses, and, in her youth, the patroness of the new poets at Court; and lastly, the third Marguerite, niece and great-niece of the first two,

daughter of Henri II. and Catherine de' Medici, first wife of Henri IV., and sister of the last Valois. It is of her that I speak to-day as having left behind her most agreeable historical pages and opened in our literature that graceful series of women's Memoirs which henceforth never ceases, but is continued in later years and lively vein by Mesdames de La Fayette, de Caylus and others. All of these Memoirs are books made without intending it, and the better for that. The following is the reason why Queen Marguerite took the idea of writing those in which she describes herself with so lightsome a pen.

Brantôme, who was making a gallery of illustrious French and foreign ladies, after bringing Marie Stuart into it, bethought him of placing Marguerite beside her as another example of the injustice and cruelty of Fortune. Marguerite, at the period when Brantôme indited his impulsive, enthusiastic portrait of her, flinging upon his paper that eulogy which may truly be called delirious, was confined at the castle of Usson in Auvergne (1593), where she was not so much a prisoner as mistress. Prisoner at first, she soon seduced the man who held her so and took possession of the place, where she passed the period of the League troubles, and beyond it, in an impenetrable haven. The castle of Usson had been fortified by Louis XI., well-versed in precautions, who wanted it as a sure place in which to lodge his prisoners. There Marguerite felt herself safe, not only from sudden attack, but also from the trial of a long siege and repeated assault. Writing to her husband, Henri IV., in October, 1594, she says to him, jokingly, that if he could see the fortress and the way in which she had protected herself within it he would see that God alone could reduce it, and she has good reason to believe that "this hermitage was built to be her ark of safety."

The castle which she thus compares to Noah's ark, and which some of her panegyrists, convinced that she who lived there was given to celestial contemplations, compare to Mount Tabor, was regarded as a Caprea and an abominable lair by enemies, who, from afar, plunged eyes of hatred into it. It is very certain, however, that Queen Marguerite lost nothing in that retreat of the delicate nicety of her mind, for it was there that she undertook to write her Memoirs in a few afternoons, in order to come to Brantôme's assistance and correct him on certain points. We will follow her, using now and then some contemporary information, without relying too much upon either, but endeavouring to draw with simple truth a singular portrait in which there enters much that was enchanting and, towards the end, fantastic.

Marguerite, born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, May 14, 1553, was six years old when her father, Henri II., was killed at that fatal tournament which ruined the fortunes of the house of Valois. She tells us several anecdotes of herself and her childish repartees which prove a precocious mind. She takes great pains to call attention to a matter which in her is really a sign, a distinctive note through all excesses, namely: that as a child and when it was the fashion at Court to be "Huguenot," and when all those who had intelligence, or wished to pass for having it, had withdrawn from what they called "bigotry," she resisted that influence. In vain did her brother, d'Anjou, afterward Henri III., fling her Hours into the fire and give her the Psalms and the Huguenot prayers in place of it; she held firm and preserved herself from the mania of Huguenotism, which at that date (1561) was a fancy at Court, a French and mundane fashion, attractive for a time to even those who were soon to turn against it and repress it. Marguerite, in the

midst of a life that was little exemplary, will always be found to have kept with sincerity this corner of good Catholicism which she derived from her race, and which made her in this respect and to this degree more of an Italian than a Frenchwoman; however, that which imports us to notice is that she *had it.*

Still a child when the first religious wars began, she was sent to Amboise with her young brother, d'Alençon. There she found herself in company with several of Brantôme's female relations: Mme. de Dampierre, his aunt, Mme. de Retz, his cousin; and she began with the elder of these ladies a true friendship; with the younger, the cousin, the affection came later. Marguerite gives the reason for this very prettily:—

"At that time the advanced age of your aunt and my childish youthfulness had more agreement; for it is the nature of old people to love children; and those who are in the perfection of their age, like your cousin, despise and dislike their annoying simplicity."

Childhood passed, and the first awakening to serious things was given to Marguerite about the time of the battle of Moncontour (1569). She was then sixteen. The Duc d'Anjou, afterwards Henri III., aged eighteen, handsome, brave, and giving promise of a virtue and a prudence he never justified, took his sister aside one day in one of the alleys of the park at Plessis-lez-Tours to tell her of his desire, on starting for the army, to leave her as his confidant and support with their mother, Catherine de' Medici, during his absence at the wars. He made her a long speech, which she reports in full with some complacency:—

"Sister, the nourishment we have taken together obliges us, not less than proximity, to love each other. . . . Until now we have naturally been guided to this without design

and without the said union being of any utility beyond the pleasure we have had in conversing together. That was good for our childhood; but now it is time to no longer live like children."

He then points out to her the great and noble duties to which God calls him, in which the queen, their mother, brought him up, and which King Charles IX., their brother, lays upon him. He fears that this king, courageous as he is, may not always be satisfied with hunting, but will become ambitious to put himself at the head of the armies, the command of which has been hitherto left to him. It is this that he wishes to prevent.

"In this apprehension," he continues, "thinking of some means of remedy, I believe that it is necessary to leave some very faithful person behind me who will maintain my side with the queen, my mother. I know no one as suitable as you, whom I regard as a second myself. You have all the qualities that can be desired,—intelligence, judgment, and fidelity."

The Duc d'Anjou then proposes to his sister to change her manner of life, to be assiduous towards the queen, their mother, at all hours, at her *lever*, in her cabinet during the day, at her *coucher*, and so act that she be treated henceforth, not as a child, but as a person who represents him during his absence. "This language," she remarks, "was very new to me, having lived until then without purpose, thinking of nothing but dancing and hunting; and without much interest even in dressing and in appearing beautiful, not having yet reached the age of such ambitions." The fear she always felt for the queen, her mother, and the respectful silence she maintained in her presence, held her back still further. "I came very near," she says, "replying to him as Moses did to God in the vision of the bush: 'Who am I?

Send, I pray thee, by him whom thou shouldest send.'" Nevertheless, she felt within her at her brother's words a new courage, and powers hitherto unknown to her, and she soon consented to all, entering zealously into her brother's design. From that moment she felt herself "transformed."

This fraternal and politic union thus created by the Duc d'Anjou did not last. On his return from the victory of Moncontour she found him changed, distrustful, and ruled by a favourite, du Gua, who possessed him as so many others possessed him later. Henceforth his sister was out of favour with him, and it was with her younger brother, the Duc d'Alençon, that Marguerite renewed and continued as long as she could a union of the same kind, which gave room for all the feelings and all the ambitious activities of youth.

Did she at that time give some ground for the coolness of her brother d'Anjou by her liaison with the young Duc de Guise? An historian who knew Marguerite well and was not hostile to her, says: "She had long loved Henri, Duc de Guise, who was killed at Blois, and had so fixed the affections of her heart from her youth upon that prince of many attractions that she never loved the King of Navarre, afterwards King of France of happy memory, but hated him from the beginning, and was married to him in spite of herself, and against canonical law."[1] However this may be, the

[1] The story goes that she refused to answer at the marriage ceremony; on which her brother, Charles IX., put his hand behind her head and made her nod, which was taken for consent. In after years, the ground given for her divorce was that of being married against her will. The marriage took place on a stage erected before the west front of the cathedral of Notre-Dame; the King of Navarre being a Protestant, the service could not be performed in the church. It was here, in view of the assembled multitude, that Marguerite's nod was forcibly given when she resolutely refused to answer. Following Brantôme's delight in describing fine clothes, the wedding gown should be mentioned here. It was cloth of gold, the body so closely covered with pearls as to look like a cuirass; over this was a blue velvet mantle embroidered with *fleurs-de-lys*, nearly five yards

Duc d'Anjou seized the pretext of the Duc de Guise to break with his sister, whose enemy he became insensibly, and he succeeded in alienating her from her mother.

Marguerite, in this flower of her youth, was, according to all testimony, enchantingly beautiful. Her beauty was not so much in the special features of her face as in the grace and charm of her whole person, with its mingling of seduction and majesty. Her hair was dark, which was not thought a beauty in those days; blond hair reigned. "I have seen her sometimes wearing her natural hair without any peruke artifice," Brantôme tells us, "and though it was black (having inherited that colour from King Henri, her father), she knew so well how to twist and curl and arrange it, in imitation of her sister, the Queen of Spain, who never wore any hair but her own, that such arrangement and coiffure became her as well as, or better than, any other." Toward the end of her life Marguerite, becoming in her turn antiquated, with no brown hair to dress, made great display of blond perukes. "For them she kept great, fair-haired footmen, who were shaved from time to time;" but in her youth, when she dared to be dark-haired as nature made her, it was not unbecoming to her; for she had a most dazzling complexion and her "beautiful fair face resembled the sky in its purest and greatest serenity" with its "noble forehead of whitening ivory." Nor must we forget her art of adorning and dressing herself to advantage, and the new inventions of that kind she gave to women, she being then the queen of the modes and fashion. As such she appeared on all solemn occasions, and notably on that day when, at the

long, which was borne by one hundred and twenty of the handsomest women in France. Her dark hair was loose and flowing, and was studded with diamond stars. The Duc de Guise, le Balafré, with his family connections and all his retainers, left Paris that morning, unable to bear the spectacle of the marriage. — Tr.

Tuileries, the queen-mother fêted the Polish seigneurs who came to offer the crown of Poland to the Duc d'Anjou, and Ronsard, who was present, confesses that the beautiful goddess Aurora was vanquished; but more notably still on that flowery Easter at Blois, when we see her in procession, her dark hair starred with diamonds and precious stones, wearing a gown of crinkled cloth of gold from Constantinople, the weight of which would have crushed any other woman, but which her beautiful, rich, strong figure supported firmly, bearing the palm in her hand, her consecrated branch, "with regal majesty, and a grace half proud, half tender." Such was the Marguerite of the lovely years before the disasters and the flights, before the castle of Usson, where she aged and stiffened.

This beauty, so real, so solid, which had so little need of borrowed charms, had, like all her being, its fantasticalities and its superstition. I have said already that she frequently disguised her rich, brown hair, preferring a blond wig, "more or less charmingly fashioned." Her beautiful face was presented to view "all painted and stained." She took such care of her skin that she spoiled it with washes and recipes of many kinds, which gave her erysipelas and pimples. In fact, she was the model and eke the slave of the fashions of her time; and as she survived those days she became in the end a species of preserved idol and curiosity, such as may be seen in a show-case. The great Sully, when he one day reappeared at the Court of Louis XIII. with his ruff and his costume of the time of Henri IV., gave that crowd of young courtiers something to laugh at; and so, when Queen Marguerite, having returned from Usson to Paris, showed herself at the remodelled Court of Henri IV. she produced the same effect on that young century, which smiled at beholding this solemn survival of the Valois.

Like all those Valois, a worthy granddaughter of François I., she was learned. To the Poles who harangued in Latin she showed that she understood them by replying on the spot, eloquently and pertinently, without the help of an interpreter. She loved poetry and wrote it, and had it written for her by salaried poets whom she treated as friends. When she had once begun to read a book she could not leave it, or pause till she came to the end, "and very often she would lose both her eating and drinking." But let us not forestall the time. She herself tells us that this taste for study and reading came to her for the first time during a previous imprisonment in which Henri III. held her for several months in 1575, and we are still concerned with her cloudless years.

She was married, in spite of her objections as a good Catholic, to Henri, King of Navarre, six days before the Saint-Bartholomew (August, 1572). She relates with much naïveté and in a simple tone the scenes of that night of horror, of which she was ignorant until the last moment. We see in her narrative that wounded and bleeding gentleman pursued through the corridors of the Louvre, and taking refuge in Marguerite's chamber, and flinging himself with the cry "Navarre! Navarre!" upon her; shielding his own body from the murderers with that of his queen, she not knowing whether she had to do with a madman or an assailant. When she did know what the danger was she saved the poor man, keeping him in bed and dressing his wounds in her cabinet until he was cured. Queen Marguerite, so little scrupulous in morality, is better than her brothers; of the vanishing Valois she has all the good qualities and many of their defects, but not their cruelty.

After this half-missed blow of the Saint-Bartholomew, which did not touch the princes of the blood, an attempt

was made to unmarry her from the King of Navarre. On a feast day when she was about to take the sacrament, her mother asked her to tell her under oath, truly, whether the king, her husband, had behaved to her as yet like a husband, a man, and whether there was not still time to break the union. To this Marguerite played the *ingénue*, so she asserts, apparently not comprehending. "I begged her," she says, "to believe that I knew nothing of what she was speaking. I could then say with truth as the Roman lady said, when her husband was angry because she had not warned him his breath was bad, 'that she had supposed all men were alike, never having been near to any one but him.'"

Here Marguerite wishes to have it understood that she had never, so far, made comparison of any man with another man; she plays the innocent, and by her quotation from the Roman lady she also plays the learned; which is quite in the line of her intelligence.

It would be a great error of literary judgment to consider these graceful Memoirs as a work of nature and simplicity; it is rather one of discrimination and subtlety. Wit sparkles throughout; but study and learning are perceptible. In the third line we come upon a Greek word: "I would praise your work more," she writes to Brantôme, "if you had praised me less; not wishing that the praise I give should be attributed to *philautia* rather than to reason;" by *philautia* she means self-love. Marguerite (she will remind us of it if we forget it) is by education and taste of the school of Ronsard, and a little of that of Du Bartas. During her imprisonment in 1575, giving herself up, as she tells us, to reading and devotion, she shows us the study which led her back to religion; she talks to us of the "universal page of Nature;" the "ladder of knowledge;" the "chain of Homer;" and of "that agreeable Encyclopædia which, starting from God,

returns to God, the principle and the end of all things." All that is learned, and even transcendental.

She was called in her family Venus-Urania. She loved fine discourses on elevated topics of philosophy or sentiment. In her last years, during her dinners and suppers, she usually had four learned men beside her, to whom she propounded at the beginning of the meal some topic more or less sublime or subtile, and when each had spoken for or against it and given his reasons, she would intervene and renew the contest, provoking and attracting to herself at will their contradiction. Here Marguerite was essentially of her period, and she bears the seal of it on her style. The language of her Memoirs is not an exception to be counted against the mannerism and taste of her time; it is only a more happy employment of it. She knows mythology and history; she cites readily Burrhus, Pyrrhus, Timon, the centaur Chiron, and the rest. Her language is by choice metaphorical and lively with poesy. When Catherine de' Medici, going to see her son, the Duc d'Anjou, travels from Paris to Tours in three days and a half (very rapid in those times, and the journey put that poor Cardinal de Bourbon, little accustomed to such discomfort, entirely out of breath), it is because the queen-mother is "borne," says Marguerite, "on the wings of desire and maternal affection."

Marguerite likes and affects all comparisons borrowed from fabulous natural history, and she varies them with reminiscences of ancient history. When, in 1582, they recall her to the Court of France, taking her from her husband and from Nérac, where she had then been three or four years, she perceives a project of her enemies to blow up a quarrel between herself and her husband during this absence. "They hoped," she says, "that separation would be like the breaking of the Macedonian battalion." When the

famous Phalanx was once broken entrance was easy. This style, so ornate and figurative, usually delicate and graceful, has also its outspokenness and firmness of tone. Speaking of the expedition projected by her brother, the Duc d' Alençon, in Flanders, she explains it in terms of energetic beauty, representing to the king that "it is for the honour and aggrandizement of France; it will prove an invention to prevent civil war, all restless spirits desirous of novelty having means to pass into Flanders and blow off their smoke and surfeit themselves with war. This enterprise will also serve, like Piedmont, as a school for the nobility in the practice of arms; we shall there revive the Montlucs and Brissacs, the Termes and the Bellegardes, and all those great marshals who, trained to war in Piedmont, have since then so gloriously and successfully served their king and their country."

One of the most agreeable parts of these Memoirs is the journey in Flanders, Hainault, and the Liège country which Marguerite made in 1577; a journey undertaken ostensibly to drink the waters of Spa, but in reality to gain partisans for her brother d'Alençon, in his project of wrenching the Low Countries from Spain. The details of her coquettish, and ceremonial magnificence, so dear to ladies, are not omitted: —

"I went," says Marguerite, "in a litter with columns covered with rose-coloured Spanish velvet, embroidered in gold and shaded silks with a device; this litter was enclosed in glass, and each glass also bore a device, there being, whether on the velvet or on the glass, forty different devices about the sun and its effects, with the words in Spanish and Italian."

Those forty devices and their explanation were an ever fresh subject of gallant conversation in the towns through

which she passed. Amid it all, Marguerite, then in the full bloom of her twenty-fourth year, went her way, winning all hearts, seducing the governors of citadels, and persuading them to useful treachery. On this journey she meets with charming Flemish scenes which she pictures delightfully. Take, for example, the gala festival at Mons, where the beautiful Comtesse de Lalain (Marguerite, Princesse de Ligne), whose beauty and rich costume are described most particularly, has her child brought to her in swaddling-clothes and suckles it before the company; "which," remarks Marguerite, "would have been an incivility in any one else; but she did it with such grace and simplicity, like all the rest of her actions, that she received as much praise as the company did pleasure."

Leaving Namur, we have at Liège a touching and pathetic story of a poor young girl, Mlle. de Tournon, who dies of grief for being slighted and betrayed by her lover, to whom she was going in the utmost confidence; and who himself, coming to a better mind too late, rushes to console her, and finds her coffin on arrival. We have here from Queen Marguerite's pen the finished sketch of a tale in the style of Mme. de La Fayette, just as above we had the drawing of a perfect little Flemish picture. On her return from this journey, the scenes Marguerite passes through at Dinant prove her coolness and presence of mind, and present us with another Flemish picture, but not so graceful as that of Mons and the beautiful nursing countess; this time it is a scene of public drunkenness, grotesque burgher rioting, and burgomasters in their cups. A painter need only transfer and copy the very lines which Marguerite has so happily traced, to make a faithful picture.

After these journeys, being now reunited at her house of La Fère in Picardy with her dear brother d'Alençon, she

realizes there for nearly two months, "which were to us," she says, "like two short days," one of those terrestrial paradises which were at all times the desire of her imagination and of her heart. She loved beyond all things those spheres of enchantment, those Fortunate Isles, alike of Urania and of Calypso, and she was ever seeking to reproduce them in all places and under all forms, whether at her Court at Nérac or amid the rocks of Usson, or, at the last, in that beautiful garden on the banks of the Seine (which to-day is the Rue des Petits-Augustins) where she strove to cheat old age.

"O my queen! how good it is to be with you!" exclaims continually her brother d'Alençon, enchanted with the thousand graceful imaginations with which she varied and embellished this sojourn at La Fère. And she adds naïvely, mingling her Christian erudition with sentiment: "He would gladly have said with Saint Peter: 'Let us make our tabernacle here,' if the regal courage he possessed and the generosity of his soul had not called him to greater things." As for her, we can conceive that she would gladly have remained there, prolonging without weariness the enchantment; she would willingly have arranged her life like that beautiful garden at Nérac of which she constantly speaks, "which has such charming alleys of laurel and cypress," or like the park she had made there, "with paths three thousand paces long beside the river;" the chapel being close at hand for morning mass, and the violins at her orders for the evening ball.

Whatever ability and shrewdness Queen Marguerite may have shown in various political circumstances in the course of her life, we nevertheless perceive plainly that she was not a political woman; she was too essentially of her sex for that. There are very few women who, like the Princess

Palatine [Anne de Gonzaga] or the illustrious Catherine of Russia, know how to be libertine yet sure of themselves; able to establish an impenetrable partition between the alcove and the cabinet of public affairs. Nearly all the women who have mingled in the intrigues of politics have introduced and confused with them their intrigues of heart or senses. Consequently, whatever intelligence they may have, they elude or escape at a certain moment, and unless there be a man who holds the tiller and gives them with decision their course, we find them unfaithful, treacherous, not to be relied on, and capable at any moment of colloguing through a secret window with an emissary of the opposite side. Marguerite, with infinite intelligence and grace, was one of those women. Distinguished but not superior, and wholly influenced by passions, she had wiles and artifices of a passing kind, but no views, and still less stability.

One of the remarkable features of her Memoirs is that she does not tell all, nor even the half of all, and in the very midst of the odious and extravagant accusations made against her she sits, pen in hand, a delicate and most discreet woman. Nothing can be less like confession than her Memoirs. "We find there," says Bayle, "many sins of omission; but could we expect that Queen Marguerite would acknowledge the things that would blast her? Such avowals are reserved for the tribunal of confession; they are not meant for history." At the most, when enlightened by history and by the pamphlets of the period, we can merely guess at certain feelings of which she presents to us only the superficial and specious side. When she speaks of Bussy d'Amboise she scarcely restrains her admiration for that gallant cavalier, and we fancy we can see in the abundance of that praise that her heart overflows.

Even the letters that we have from her say little more.

Among them are love letters addressed to him whom at one time she loved the most, Harlay de Chanvalon. Here we find no longer the charming, moderately ornate, and naturally polished style of the Memoirs; this is all of the highest metaphysics and purest fustian, nearly unintelligible and most ridiculous. "Adieu, my beauteous sun! adieu, my noble angel! fine miracle of nature!" those are the most commonplace and earthly of her expressions; the rest mount ever higher till lost in the Empyrean. It would really seem, from reading these letters, as if Marguerite had never loved with heart-love, only with the head and the imagination; and that, feeling truly no love but the physical, she felt herself bound to refine it in expression and to *petrarchize* in words, she, who was so practical in behaviour. She borrows from the false poetry of her day its tinsel in order to persuade herself that the fancy of the moment is an eternal worship. A practical observation is quoted of her which tells us better than her own letters the secret of her life. "Would you cease to love?" she said, "possess the thing beloved." It is to escape this quick disenchantment, this sad and rapid awakening, that she is so prodigal of her figurative, mythological, impossible expressions; she is trying to make herself a veil; the heart counts for nothing. She seems to be saying to love: "Thy base is so trivial, so passing a thing, let us try to support it by words, and so prolong its image and its play."

Her life well deduced and well related would make the subject of a teeming and interesting volume. Having obtained, after the persecutions and troubles, permission to rejoin her husband in Gascogne (1578), she remained there three and a half years, enjoying her liberty and leaving him his. She counts these days at Nérac, mingled, in spite of the re-beginning wars, with balls, excursions, and "all sorts

of virtuous pleasures," as an epoch of happiness. Henri's weaknesses and her own harmonized remarkably, and never clashed. But Henri soon crossed the limit of license, and she, on her side, equally. It is not for us to hold the balance or enter here into details which would soon become indelicate and shameful. Marguerite, who had gone to spend some time in Paris at her brother's Court (1582, 1583) did not return to her husband until after an odious scandal had made public her frailty.

From that time forth her life did not retain its early, smiling joyfulness. She was now past thirty; civil wars were lighted, never to be extinguished until after the desperate struggles and total defeat of the League. Marguerite, becoming a queen-adventuress, changed her abode from time to time, until she found herself in the castle of Usson, that asylum of which I have spoken, where she passed no less than eighteen years (1587–1605). What happened there? Doubtless many common frailties, but less odious than are told by bitter and dishonourable chroniclers, the only authorities for the tales they put forth.

During this time Queen Marguerite did not entirely cease to correspond with her husband, now become King of France. If the conduct of the royal pair leaves much to be desired with regard to each other, and also with regard to the public, let us at least recognize that their correspondence is that of honourable persons, persons of good company, whose hearts are much better than their morals. When reasons of State determined Henri to *unmarry himself*, to break a union which was not only sterile but scandalous, Marguerite agreed without resistance, — seeming, however, to be fully conscious of what she was losing. To accomplish the formalities of divorce, the pope delegated certain bishops and cardinals to interrogate separately the husband and

wife. Marguerite expresses the desire, inasmuch as she must be questioned, that this may be done " by more private and familiar " persons, her courage not being able to endure publicly so great a *diminution;* " fearing that my tears," she writes, " may make these cardinals think I am acting from force or constraint, which would injure the effect the king desires " (Oct. 21, 1599). King Henri was touched by the feelings she showed throughout this long negotiation. " I am very satisfied," he writes, " at the ingenuousness and candour of your procedure; and I hope that God will bless the remainder of our days with fraternal affection, accompanied by the public good, which will render them very happy." He calls her henceforth his sister; and she herself says to him: " You are father, brother, and king to me." If their marriage was one of the least noble and the most bourgeois, their divorce, at any rate, was royal.

[Here Sainte-Beuve does not keep strictly to history. Henri IV. had long urged Marguerite to consent to a divorce; but she, aware that he was taking steps to divorce Gabrielle d'Estrées from her husband, in order to marry her, and feeling the indignity of such a marriage, firmly refused, and continued to do so until the sudden death of Gabrielle in Paris during Holy Week of 1599; on which Marguerite consented at once to the divorce, and Henri married Marie de' Medici, December 17 of the same year.

Five years later (1605) Marguerite returned from the castle of Usson and held her Court in Paris at the hôtel de Sens (which still exists) and at her various châteaux in Languedoc; no longer, alas! the Reine Margot of our ill-regulated affections, and somewhat open to the malicious comments of Tallemant des Reaux, but appearing at times with all her wonted spirit and regal dignity. These were



The Coronation of Marie de Medici

the days when she kept a brigade of golden-haired footmen who were shorn for the wigs; and the story goes that her gowns were made with many pockets, in each of which she kept the mummied heart of a lover. But such tales must be taken for what they are worth, and a better chronicler than the satirists of the Valois has given us ocular proof of her last majestic presence at a public ceremony five years before her death.

In 1610, Henri IV. preparing to leave France for the war in Germany, and wishing to appoint Queen Marie de' Medici regent, it became necessary to have the latter crowned. This was done in the cathedral of Saint-Denis, May 13, 1610. The Queen of Navarre, as Marguerite, daughter of France and first princess of the blood, was required to be present at the ceremony. Rubens' splendid picture (reproduced in this volume) gives the scene. Marie de' Medici, kneeling before the altar, is being crowned by Cardinal de Joyeuse, assisted by his clergy and two other cardinals; beside the queen are the dauphin (Louis XIII.) and his sister, Élisabeth, afterwards Queen of Spain. The Princesse de Conti and the Duchesse de Montpensier carry the queen's train; the Duc de Ventadour, his back to the spectator, bears the sceptre, and the Chevalier de Vendôme the sword of Justice. To the left, leading the cortège of princesses and nobles, is the Queen of Navarre, easily recognized by her small closed crown, all the other princesses wearing coronets. In the background, to right, in a gallery, sits Henri IV. viewing the ceremony. As he did so he turned with a shudder to the man behind him and said: "I am thinking how this scene would appear if this were the Last Day and the Judge were to summon us all before Him." Henri IV. was killed by Ravaillac the following morning, while his coach stood blocked in the streets by the crowds who

were collecting for the public entry of Marie de' Medici into Paris.

The young Élisabeth, eldest daughter of the king and Marie de' Medici, who appears at the coronation of her mother, was afterwards wife of Philip IV. of Spain, and mother of the Infanta Maria Theresa, wife of Louis XIV., also of Carlos II., at whose death Louis XIV. obtained the crown of Spain for his grandson, the Duc d'Anjou, Philip V. This Élisabeth of France, Queen of Spain, is the original of Rubens' magnificent portrait reproduced in this chapter. — Tr.]

Queen Marguerite returned from Usson to Paris in 1605; and here we find her in her last estate, turned slightly to ridicule by Tallemant, the echo of the new century. Eighteen years of confinement and solitude had given her singularities, and even manias; they now burst forth in open day. She still had adventures both gallant and startling: an equerry whom she loved was killed at her carriage door by a jealous servant, and the poet Maynard, a young disciple of Malherbe, one of Marguerite's *beaux-esprits*, wrote stanzas and plaints about it. During the same period Marguerite had many sincere thoughts that were more than fits of devotion. With Maynard for secretary, she had also Vincent de Paul, young in those days, for her chaplain. She founded and endowed convents, all the while paying learned men to instruct her in philosophy, and musicians to amuse her during divine service and at hours more profane. She gave many alms and gratuities and did not pay her debts. It was not precisely good sense that presided over her life. But amidst it all she was loved. "On the 27th day of the month of March" (1615), says a contemporary, "died in Paris Queen Marguerite, sole remains of the race of Valois, — a princess full of kindness and of good intentions for the good and the

peace of the State, *who did no harm to any but herself.* She was greatly regretted. She died at the age of sixty-two."

Certain persons have attempted to compare her for beauty, for misfortunes, for intellect, with Marie Stuart. Certainly, at a point of departure there was much in common between the two queens, the two sisters-in-law, but the comparison cannot be maintained historically. Marie Stuart, who had in herself the wit, grace, and manners of the Valois, who was scarcely more moral as a woman than Marguerite, and was implicated in acts that were far more monstrous, had, or seemed to have, a certain elevation of heart, which she acquired, or developed, in her long captivity crowned by her sorrowful death. Of the two destinies, the one represents definitely a great cause, and ends in a pathetic legend of victim and martyr; the reputation of the other is spent and scattered in tales and anecdotes half smutty, half devout, into which there enters a grain of satire and of gayety. From the end of one comes many a tearful tragedy; from that of the other nought can be made but a *fabliau.*

That which ought to be remembered to Marguerite's honour is her intelligence, her talent for saying the right word; in short, that which is said of her in the Memoirs of Cardinal de Richelieu: "She was the refuge of men of letters; she loved to hear them talk; her table was always surrounded by them, and she learned so much from their conversation that she talked better than any other woman of her time, and wrote more elegantly than the ordinary condition of her sex would warrant." It is in that way, by certain exquisite pages which form a date in our language, that she enters, in her turn, into literary history, the noble refuge of so many wrecks, and that a last and a lasting ray shines from her name.

C.-A. SAINTE-BEUVE, *Causeries du Lundi* (1852).

DISCOURSE VI.

MESDAMES, THE DAUGHTERS OF THE NOBLE HOUSE OF FRANCE.[1]

1. *Madame Yoland de France.*

'T IS a thing that I have heard great personages, both men and ladies of the Court, remark, that usually the daughters of the house of France have been good, or witty, or gracious, or generous, and in all things accomplished; and to confirm this opinion they do not go back to the olden time, but say it of those of whom they have knowledge themselves, or have heard their fathers and grandfathers who have been at the Court talk of.

First, I shall name here Madame Yoland of France, daughter of Charles VII., and wife of the Duc de Savoie and Prince of Piedmont.

She was very clever; true sister to her brother, Louis XI. She leaned a little to the party of Duc Charles de Bourgogne, her brother-in-law, he having married her elder sister Catherine, who scarcely lived after wedding her husband, so that her virtues do not appear. Yoland, seeing that Duc Charles was her neighbour and might be feared, did what she could to maintain his friendship, and he served her much in the business of her State. But he dying, King Louis XI. came down upon her grandeur and her means, and those of Savoie. But Madame la duchesse, clever lady! found means of winning over her brother the king, and went to see

[1] Meaning the daughters of the kings of France only. — TR.

him at Plessis-lez-Tours to settle their affairs. She having arrived, the king went down to meet her in the courtyard and welcome her; and having bowed and kissed her and put his arm around her neck, half laughing, half pinching her, he said: "Madame la Bourgognian, you are very welcome." She, making him a great curtsey, replied: "Monsieur, I am not Bourgognian; you will pardon me if you please. I am a very good Frenchwoman and your humble servant." On which the king took her by the arm and led her to her chamber with very good welcome; but Madame Yoland, who was shrewd and knew the king's nature, was determined not to remain long with him, but to settle her affairs as fast as she could and get away.

The king, on the other hand, who knew the lady, did not press her to stay very long; so that if one was displeased with the other, the other was displeased with the first; wherefore without staying more than eight days she returned, very little content with the king, her brother.

Philippe de Commines has told about this meeting more at length; but the old people of those days said that they thought this princess a very able female, who owed nothing to the king, her brother, who twitted her often about being a Bourgognian; but she tacked about as gently and modestly as she could, for fear of affronting him, knowing full well, and better than even her brother, how to dissimulate, being a hundred times slyer than he in face, and speech, and ways, though always very good and very wise.

2. *Madame Jeanne de France.*

Jeanne de France, daughter of the aforesaid king, Louis XI., was very witty, but so good that after her death she was counted a saint, and even as doing miracles, because of the sanctity of the life she led after her husband, Louis XII.,

repudiated her [to marry Anne de Bretagne]; after which she retired to Bourges, which was given her as a dowry for the term of her natural life; where all her time was spent in prayer and orisons and in serving God and his poor, without giving any sign of the wrong that was done her by such repudiation. But the king protested that he had been forced to marry her fearing the wrath of her father, Louis XI., a master-man, and declared positively that he had never known her as his wife. Thus the matter was allowed to pass; in which this princess showed her wisdom, not making the reply of Richarde of Scotland, wife of Charles le Gros, King of France, when her husband repudiated her, affirming that he had never lived with her as his wife. "That is well," she said, "since by the oath of my husband I am maid and virgin." By those words she scoffed at her husband's oath and her own virginity.

But the king was seeking to recover his first loves, namely: Queen Anne and her noble duchy, which gave great temptations to his soul; and that was why he repudiated his wife. His oath was believed and accepted by the pope, who sent him the dispensation, which was received by the Sorbonne and the parliament of Paris. In all of which this princess was wise and virtuous, and made no scandal, nor uproar, nor appeal to justice, because a king can do much and just what he will; but feeling herself strong to contain herself in continence and chastity, she retired towards God and espoused herself to Him so truly that never another husband nor a better could she have.

3. *Madame Anne de France.*

After her comes her sister, Anne de France, a shrewd woman and a cunning if ever there was one, and the true image of King Louis, her father. The choice made of her

to be guardian and administrator of her brother, King Charles [VIII.], proves this, for she governed him so wisely and virtuously that he came to be one of the greatest of the kings of France, who was proclaimed, by reason of his valour, Emperor of the East. As to his kingdom she administered that in like manner. True it is that because of her ambition she was rather mischief-making, on account of the hatred she bore to M. d'Orléans, afterwards King Louis XII. I have heard say, however, that in the beginning she loved him with love; so that if M. d'Orléans had been willing to hear to her, he might have had better luck, as I hold on good authority. But he could not constrain himself, all the more because he saw her so ambitious, and he wished his wife to depend upon him as first and nearest prince to the crown, and not upon herself; while she desired the contrary, for she wanted to hold the highest place and to govern in all things.

She was very vindictive in temper like her father, and always a sly dissembler, corrupt, full of deceit, and a great hypocrite, who, for the sake of her ambition, could mask and disguise herself in any way. So that the kingdom, beginning to be angry at her humours, although she was wise and virtuous, bore with them so impatiently that when the king went to Naples she no longer had the title of regent, but her husband, M. de Bourbon, received it. It is true, however, that she made him do what she had in her head, for she ruled him and knew how to guide him, all the better because he was rather foolish, — indeed, very much so; but the Council opposed and controlled her. She endeavoured to use her prerogative and authority over Queen Anne, but there she found the boot on the other foot, as they say, for Queen Anne was a shrewd Bretonne, as I have told already, who was very superb and haughty towards her

equals; so that Madame Anne was forced to lower her sails and leave the queen, her sister-in-law, to keep her rank and maintain her grandeur and majesty, as was reasonable; which made Madame Anne very angry; for she, being virtually regent, held to her grandeur terribly.

I have read many letters from her to our family in the days of her greatness; but never did I see any of our kings (and I have seen many) talk and write so bravely and imperiously as she did, as much to the great as to the small. Of a surety, she was a *maîtresse femme*, though quarrelsome, and if M. d'Orléans had not been captured and his luck had not served him ill, she would have thrown France into turmoil; and all for her ambition, which so long as she lived she never could banish from her soul, — not even when retired to her estates, where, nevertheless, she pretended to be pleased and where she held her Court, which was always, as I have heard my grandmother say, very fine and grand, she being accompanied by great numbers of ladies and maids of honour, whom she trained very wisely and virtuously. In fact she gave such fine educations (as I know from my grandmother) that there were no ladies or daughters of great houses in her time who did not receive lessons from her, the house of Bourbon being one of the greatest and most splendid in Christendom. And indeed it was she who made it so brilliant, for though she was opulent in estates and riches of her own, she played her hand so well in the regency that she gained a great deal more; all of which served to make the house of Bourbon more dazzling. Besides being splendid and magnificent by nature and unwilling to diminish by ever so little her early grandeur, she also did many great kindnesses to those whom she liked and took in hand. To end all, this Anne de France was very clever and sufficiently good. I have now said enough about her.

4. *Madame Claude de France.*

I must now speak of Madame Claude de France, who was very good, very charitable, and very gentle to all, never doing any unkindness or harm to any one either at her Court or in the kingdom. She was much beloved by King Louis [XII.] and Queen Anne, her father and mother, being their good and best-loved daughter, as they showed her plainly; for after the king was peaceably Duke of Milan they declared and proclaimed her, in the parliament of Paris with open doors, duchess of the two finest duchies in Christendom, to wit, Milan and Bretagne, the one coming from her father, the other from her mother. What an heiress, if you please! These two duchies joined together made a noble kingdom.

Queen Anne, her mother, desired to marry her to Charles of Austria, afterwards emperor, and had she lived she would have done so, for in that she influenced the king, her husband, wishing always to have the sole charge and care of the marriage of her daughters. Never did she call them otherwise than by their names: "My daughter Claude," and "My daughter Renée." In these our days, estates and seigneuries must be given to daughters of princesses, and even of ladies, by which to call them! If Queen Anne had lived, never would Madame Claude have been married to King François [I.] for she foresaw the evil treatment she was certain to receive; the king, her husband, giving her a disease that shortened her days. Also, Madame la regente treated her harshly. But she strengthened her soul as much as she could, by her sound mind and gentle patience and great wisdom, to endure these troubles, and in spite of all, she bore the king, her husband, a fine and generous progeny, namely: three sons, François, Henri, and Charles; and four daughters, Louise, Charlotte, Magdelaine, and Marguerite.

She was much beloved by her husband, King François [I.], and well treated by him and by all France, and much regretted when she died for her admirable virtues and goodness. I have read in the "Chronique d'Anjou" that after her death her body worked miracles; for a great lady of her family being tortured one day with a hot fever, and having made her a vow, recovered her health suddenly.

5. *Madame Renée de France.*

Madame Renée, her sister, was also a very good and able princess; for she had as sound and subtle mind as could be. She had studied much, and I have heard her discoursing learnedly and gravely of the sciences, even astrology, and knowledge of the stars, about which I heard her talking one day with the queen-mother, who said, after hearing her, that the greatest philosopher in the world could not have spoken better.

She was promised in marriage to the Emperor Charles, by King François; but the war interrupting that marriage, she was given to the Duc de Ferrara, who loved her much and treated her honourably as the daughter of a king. True it is they were for a time rather ill together because of the Lutheran religion he suspected her of liking. Possibly; for resenting the ill-turns the popes had done to her father in every way, she denied their power and refused obedience, not being able to do worse, she being a woman. I hold on good authority that she said this often. Her husband, nevertheless, having regard to her illustrious blood, respected her always and honoured her much. Like her sister, Queen Claude, she was fortunate in her issue, for she bore to her husband the finest that was, I believe, in Italy, although she herself was much weakened in body.

She had the Duc de Ferrara, who is to-day one of the

handsomest princes in Italy and very wise and generous; the late Cardinal d'Est, the kindest, most magnificent and liberal man in the world (of whom I hope to speak hereafter); and three daughters, the most beautiful women ever born in Italy: Madame Anne d'Est, afterwards Mme. de Guise; Madame Lucrezia, Duchesse d'Urbino; and Madame Leonora, who died unmarried. The first two bore the names of their grandmothers: one from Anne de Bretagne on her mother's side; the other, on the father's side, from Lucrezia Borgia, daughter of Pope Alexander [VI.], both very different in manners as in character, although the said lady Lucrezia Borgia was a charming princess of Spanish extraction, gifted with beauty and virtue (see Guicciardini). Madame Leonora was named after Queen Leonora. These daughters were very handsome, but their mother embellished them still more by the noble education that she gave them, making them study sciences and good letters, the which they learned and retained perfectly, putting to shame the greatest scholars. So that if they had beautiful bodies they had souls that were beautiful also. I shall speak of them elsewhere.

Now, if Madame Renée was clever, intelligent, wise, and virtuous, she was also so kind and understood the subjects of her husband so well that I never knew any one in Ferrara who was not content or failed to say all the good in the world of her. They felt above all her charity, which she had in great abundance and principally for Frenchmen; for she had this good thing about her, that she never forgot her nation; and though she was thrust far away from it, she always loved it deeply. No Frenchman passing through Ferrara, being in necessity and addressing her, ever left without an ample donation and good money to return to his country and family; and if he were ill, and could

not travel, she had him treated and cured carefully and then gave him money to return to France.

I have heard persons who know it well, and an infinite number of soldiers who had good experience of it say that after the journey of M. de Guise into Italy, she saved the lives of at least ten thousand poor Frenchmen, who would have died of starvation and want without her; and among the number were many nobles of good family. I have heard some of them say that never could they have reached France without her, so great was her charity and liberality to those of her nation. And I have also heard her *maître d'hôtel* assert that their food had cost her more than ten thousand crowns; and when the stewards of her household remonstrated and showed her this excessive expense, she only said: "How can I help it? These are poor Frenchmen of my nation, who, if God had put a beard on my chin and made me a man, would now be my subjects; and truly they would be so now if that wicked Salic law did not hold me in check."

She is all the more to be praised because, without her, the old proverb would be still more true, namely, that "Italy is the grave of Frenchmen."

But if her charity was shown at that time in this direction, I can assure you that in other places she did not fail to practise it. I have heard several of her household say that on her return to France, having retired to her town and house of Montargis about the time the civil wars began to stir, she gave a refuge as long as she lived to a number of persons of the Religion [Reformers] who were driven or banished from their houses and estates; she aided, succoured, and fed as many as she could.

I myself, at the time of the second troubles, was with the forces in Gascoigne, commanded by MM. de Terridès

and de Montsalès, amounting to eight thousand men, then on their way to join the king. We passed through Montargis and went, the leaders, chief captains, and gentlemen, to pay our respects to Madame Renée, as our duty commanded. We saw in the castle, as I believe, more than three hundred persons of the Religion, who had taken refuge there from all parts of the country. An old *maître d'hôtel,* a very honest man, whom I had known in Ferrara, swore to me that she fed every day more than three hundred mouths of these poor people.

In short, this princess was a true daughter of France in kindness and charity. She had also a great and lofty heart. I have seen her in Italy and at Court, hold her state as well as possible; and though she did not have an external appearance of grandeur, her body being weakened, there was so much majesty in her royal face and speech that she showed plainly enough she was daughter of a king and of France.

6. *Mesdames Charlotte, Louise, Magdelaine, and Marguerite de France.*

I have said that Madame Claude [wife of François I.] was fortunate in her fine progeny of daughters as well as of sons. First she had Mesdames Charlotte and Louise, whom death did not allow to reach the perfect age and noble fruit their tender youth had promised in sweet flowers. Had they come to the perfection of their years they would have equalled their sisters in mind and goodness, for their promise was great. Madame Louise was betrothed to the Emperor when she died. Thus are lovely rosebuds swept away by the wind, as well as full-blown flowers. Youth thus ravished is more to be regretted than old age, which has had its day and its loss is not great. Almost the same thing happened

to Madame Magdelaine, their sister, who had no great time allowed her to enjoy the thing in all the world she most desired; which was, to be a queen, so proud and lofty was her heart.

She was married to the King of Scotland; and when they wanted to dissuade her — not, certainly, that he was not a brave and handsome prince, but because she thus condemned herself to make her dwelling in a barbarous land among a brutal people — she replied: "At least I shall be queen so long as I live; that is what I have always wished for." But when she arrived in Scotland she found that country just what they had told her, and very different from her sweet France. Still, without one sign of repentance, she said nothing except these words: "Alas! I would be queen," — covering her sadness and the fire of her ambition with the ashes of patience as best she could. M. de Ronsard, who went with her to Scotland, told me all this; he had been a page of M. d'Orléans, who allowed him to go with her, to see the world.

She did not live long a queen before she died, regretted by the king and all the country, for she was truly good, and made herself beloved, having, moreover, a fine mind, and being wise and virtuous.

Her sister, Madame Marguerite de France [the second of the three Marguerites], afterwards Duchesse de Savoie, was so wise, virtuous, and perfect in learning and knowledge that she was called the Minerva, or the Pallas, of France, and for device she bore an olive branch with two serpents entwining it, and the words: *Rerum Sapientia custos:* signifying that all things are ruled, or should be, by wisdom — of which she had much, and knowledge also; improving them ever by continual study in the afternoons, and by lessons which she received from learned men, whom she



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loved above all other sorts of people. For which reason they honoured her as their goddess and patron. The great quantity of noble books which they wrote and dedicated to her show this, and as they have said enough I shall say no more about her learning.

Her heart was grand and lofty. King Henri wished to marry her to M. de Vendôme, first prince of the blood; but she made answer that never would she marry a subject of the king, her brother. That is why she was so long without a husband; until, peace being made between the two Christian and Catholic kings, she was married to M. de Savoie, to whom she had aspired for a long time, ever since the days of King François, when Pope Paul III. and King François met at Nice, and the Queen of Navarre went, by command of the king, to see the late Duc de Savoie in the castle of Nice, taking with her Madame Marguerite, her niece, who was thought most agreeable by M. de Savoie, and very suitable for his son. But the affair dragged on, because of the great war, until the peace, when the marriage was made and consummated at great cost to France; for all that we had conquered and held in Piedmont and Savoie for the space of thirty years, was given back in one hour; so much did King Henri desire peace and love his sister, not sparing anything to marry her well. But all the same, the greater part of France and Piedmont murmured and said it was too much.

Others thought it very strange, and others very incredible, until they had seen her; and even foreigners mocked at us: and those who loved France and her true good wept, and lamented, especially those in Piedmont who did not wish to return to their former masters.

As for the French soldiers, and the war companions who had so long enjoyed the garrisons, charms, and fine living of

that beautiful country, there is no need to ask what they said, nor how they grumbled and were desperate and bemoaned themselves. Some, more Gascon than the rest, said: "Hey! *cap de Diou!* for the little bit of flesh of that woman, must we give back that large and noble piece of earth?" Others: "A fine thing truly to call her Minerva, goddess of chastity, and send her here to Piedmont to change her name at our expense!"

I have heard great captains say that if Piedmont had been left to us, and only Savoie and Bresse given up, the marriage would still have been very rich and very fine; and if we could have stayed in Piedmont that region would have served as a school and an amusement to the French soldiers, who would have stayed there and not been so eager after civil wars, — it being the nature of Frenchmen to busy themselves always with the toils of Mars, and to hate idleness, rest, and peace.

But such was now the unhappy fate of France. It was thus that peace was bought, and Madame de Savoie could not help it; although she never desired the ruin of France; on the contrary, she loved nothing so much as the people of her nation; and if she received benefits from them she was not ungrateful, but served them and succoured them all she could; and as long as she lived she persuaded and won her husband, Monsieur de Savoie, to keep the peace, and not combine, he being a Spaniard for life, against France, which he did as soon as she was dead. For then he stirred up, supported, and strengthened secretly M. le Maréchal de Bellegarde to do what he did and to rebel against the king, and seize upon the marquisate of Saluces (which I shall speak of elsewhere); in which certainly his Highness did great wrong, and ill returned the benefits received from the Kings of France his relatives, especially our late King

Henri III., who, on his return from Poland, gave him so liberally Pignerol and Savillan.

Many well-advised persons believe that if Madame de Savoie had lived she would have died sooner than allow that blow, so grateful did she feel to the land of her birth. And I have heard a very great person say that he thought that if Madame de Savoie were living and had seen her son seize upon the marquisate of Saluces (as he did in the time of the late king), she would have strangled him; indeed, the late king himself thought so and said so. That king, Henri III., felt such wrath at that stroke that the morning when the news reached him, as he was about to take the sacrament, he put off that act and would not do it, so excited, angry, and scrupulous was he, within as well as without; and he always said that if his aunt had lived it would never have happened.

Such was the good opinion this good princess left in the minds of the king and of other persons. And to tell the truth, as I know from high authority, if she had not been so good never would the king or his council have portioned her with such great wealth, which, surely, she never spared for France and Frenchmen. No Frenchman could complain, when addressing her for his necessities in going or coming across the mountains, that she did not succour and assist him and give him good money to help him on his way. I know that when we returned from Malta, she did great favours and gave much money to many Frenchmen who addressed her and asked her for it; and also, without being asked, she offered it. I can say that, as knowing it myself; for Mme. de Pontcarlier, sister of M. de Retz, who was Madame de Savoie's favourite and lady of honour, asked me to supper one evening in her room, and gave me, in a purse, five hundred crowns on behalf of the said Madame,

who loved my aunt, Mme. de Dampierre, extremely and had also loved my mother. But I can swear with truth and security that I did not take a penny of it, for I had enough with me to take me back to Court; and had I not, I would rather have gone on foot than be so shameless and impudent as to beg of such a princess. I knew many who did not do like that, but took very readily what they could get.

I have heard one of her stewards say that every year she put away in a coffer a third of her revenue to give to poor Frenchmen who passed through Savoie. That is the good Frenchwoman that she was; and no one should complain of the wealth she took from France; and it was all her joy when she heard good news from there, and all her grief when it was bad.

When the first wars broke out she felt such woe she thought to die of it; and when peace was made and she came to Lyon to meet the king and the queen-mother, she could not rejoice enough, begging the queen to tell her all; and showing anger to several Huguenots, telling them and writing them that they stirred up strife, and urging them not to do so again; for they honoured her much and had faith in her, because she gave pleasure to many; indeed M. l'Amiral [Coligny] would not have enjoyed his estates in Savoie had it not been for her.

When the civil wars came on in Flanders she was the first to tell us on our arrival from Malta; and you may be sure she was not sorry for them; "for," said she, "those Spaniards rejoiced and scoffed at us for our discords, but now that they have their share they will scoff no longer."

She was so beloved in the lands and countries of her husband that when she died tears flowed from the eyes of all, both great and small, so that for long they did not dry nor cease. She spoke for every one to her husband when they

were in trouble and adversity, in pain or in fault, requesting favour or pardon, which without her intercessions they would often not have had. Thus they called her their patron-saint.

In short, she was the blessing of the world; in all ways, as I have said, charitable, munificent, liberal, wise, virtuous, and so accessible and gentle as never was, principally to those of her nation; for when they went to do her reverence she received them with such welcome they were shamed; the most unimportant gentlemen she honoured in the same way, and often did not speak to them until they were covered. I know what I say, for, speaking with her on one occasion, she did me this honour, and urged and commanded me so much that I was constrained to say: "Madame, I think you do not take me for a Frenchman, but for one who is ignorant who you are and the rank you hold; but I must honour you as belongs to me." She never spoke to any one sitting down herself, but always standing; unless they were principal personages, and those I saw speaking to her she obliged to sit beside her.

To conclude, one could never tell all the good of this princess as it was; it would need a worthier writer than I to represent her virtues. I shall be silent, therefore, till some future time, and begin to tell of the daughters of our King Henri [II. and Catherine de' Medici], Mesdames Élisabeth, Claude, and Marguerite de France.

7. *Mesdames Élisabeth, Claude, and Marguerite de France.*

I begin by the eldest, Madame Élisabeth de France, or rather I ought to call her the beautiful Élisabeth of the world on account of her rare virtues and perfections, the Queen of Spain, beloved and honoured by her people in her lifetime, and deeply regretted and mourned by the same after

death, as I have said already in the Discourse I made upon her. Therefore I shall content myself for the present in writing no more, but will speak of her sister, the second daughter of King Henri, Madame Claude de France (the name of her grandmother), Duchesse de Lorraine, who was a beautiful, wise, virtuous, good, and gentle princess. So that every one at Court said that she resembled her mother and aunt and was their real image. She had a certain gayety in her face which pleased all those who looked at her. In her beauty she resembled her mother, in her knowledge and kindness she resembled her aunt; and the people of Lorraine found her ever kind as long as she lived, as I myself have seen when I went to that country; and after her death they found much to say of her. In fact, by her death that land was filled with regrets, and M. de Lorraine mourned her so much that, though he was young when widowed of her, he would not marry again, saying he could never find her like, though could he do so he would remarry, not being disinclined.

She left a noble progeny and died in childbed, through the appetite of an old midwife of Paris, a drunkard, in whom she had more faith than in any other.

The news of her death reached Reims the day of the king's coronation, and all the Court were in mourning and extreme sadness, for her kindness was shown to all when she came there. The last time she came, the king, her brother, made her a gift of the ransoms of Guyenne, which came from the confiscations that took place there; but the ransoms were made so heavy that often they exceeded the value of the confiscations.

Mme. de Dampierre asked her for one, one day when I was present, for a gentleman whom I know. The princess made answer: "Mme. de Dampierre, I give it to you with

all my heart, having merely accepted this gift from the king, my brother, not having asked for it; he gave it to me of his own good-will; not to injure France, for I am French and love all those who are so like myself; they will have more courtesy from me than from another who might have had that gift; therefore what they want of me and ask of me I will give." And truly, those who had to do with her found her all courtesy, gentleness, and goodness.

In short, she was a true daughter of France, having good mind and ability, which she proved by seconding wisely and ably her husband, M. de Lorraine, in the government of his seigneuries and principalities.

After this Claude de France, comes that beautiful Marguerite de France, Queen of Navarre, of whom I have already spoken; for which reason I am silent here, awaiting another time; for I think that April in its springtime never produced such lovely flowers and verdure as this princess of ours produced blooming at all seasons in noble and diverse ways, so that all the good in the world could be said of her.

8. *Madame Diane de France.*

Nor must I forget Madame Diane de France; although she was bastard and a natural child, we must place her in the rank of the daughters of France, because she was acknowledged by the late King Henri [II.] and legitimatized and afterwards dowered as daughter of France; for she was given the duchy of Chastellerault, which she quitted to be Duchesse d'Angoulême, a title and estate she retains at this day, with all the privileges of a daughter of France, even to that of entering the cabinets and state business of her brothers, King Charles and King Henri III. (where I have often seen her), as though she were their own sister.

Indeed, they loved her as such. She had much resemblance to King Henri, her father, as much in features of the face as in habits and actions. She loved all the exercises that he loved, whether arms, hunting, or horses. I think it is not possible for any lady to look better on horseback than she did, or to have better grace in riding.

I have heard say (and read) from certain old persons, that little King Charles VIII. being in his kingdom of Naples, Mme. la Princesse de Melfi, coming to do him reverence, showed him her daughter, beautiful as an angel, mounted on a noble courser, managing him so well, with all the airs and paces of the ring, that no equerry could have done better, and the king and all his Court were in great admiration and astonishment to see such beauty so dexterous on horseback, yet without doing shame to her sex.

Those who have seen Madame d'Angoulême on horseback were as much delighted and amazed; for she was so born to it and had such grace that she resembled in that respect the beautiful Camilla, Queen of the Volsci; she was so grand in body and shape and face that it was hard to find any one at Court as superb and graceful at that exercise; nor did she exceed in any way the proper modesty and gentleness; indeed, like the Princesse Melfi, she outdid modesty; except when she rode through the country, when she showed some pretty performances that were very agreeable to those who beheld them.

I remember that M. le Maréchal d'Amville, her brother-in-law, gave her, once upon a time, a very fine horse, which he named *le Docteur*, because he stepped so daintily and advanced curveting with such precision and nicety that a doctor could not have been wiser in his actions; and that is why he called him so. I saw Madame d'Angoulême make that horse go more than three hundred steps pacing



Diane de France



in that way; and often the whole Court was amused to see it, and could not tell which to admire most, her firm seat, or her beautiful grace. Always, to add to her lustre, she was finely attired in a handsome and rich riding-dress, not forgetting a hat well garnished with plumes, worn *à la* Guelfe. Ah! what a pity it is when old age comes to spoil such beauties and blemish such virtues; for now she has left all that, and quitted those exercises, and also the hunting which became her so much; for nothing was ever unbecoming to her in her gestures and manners, like the king, her father,—she taking pains and pleasure in what she did, at a ball, in dancing; indeed in whatever dance it was, whether grave or gay, she was very accomplished.

She sang well, and played well on the lute and other instruments. In fact, she is her father's daughter in that, as she is in kindness, for indeed she is very kind, and never gives pain to any one, although she has a grand and lofty heart, but her soul is generous, wise, and virtuous, and she has been much beloved by both her husbands.

She was first married to the Duc de Castro, of the house of Farnese, who was killed at the assault at Hesdin; secondly, to M. de Montmorency, who made some difficulty in the beginning, having promised to marry Mlle. de Pienne, one of the queen's maids of honour, a beautiful and virtuous girl; but to obey a father who was angry and threatened to disinherit him, he obtained his release from his first promise and married Madame Diane. He lost nothing by the change, though the said Pienne came from one of the greatest families in France, and was one of the most beautiful, virtuous, and wise ladies of the Court, whom Madame Diane loved, and has always loved without any jealousy of her past affections with her husband. She knows how to control herself, for she is very intelligent and of good under-

standing. The kings, her brothers, and Monsieur loved her much, and so did the queens and duchesses, her sisters, for she never shamed them, being so perfect in all things.

King Charles loved her, because she went with him to his hunts and other joyous amusements, and was always gay and good-humoured.

King Henri [III.] loved her, because he knew that she loved him and liked to be with him. When war arose so cruelly on the death of M. de Guise, knowing the king, her brother, to be in need, she started from her house at Isle-Adam, in a diligence, not without running great risks, being watched for on the road, and took him fifty thousand crowns, which she had saved from her revenues, and gave them to him. They arrived most *à propos* and, as I believe, are still owing to her; for which the king felt such good-will that had he lived he would have done great things for her, having tested her fine nature in his utmost need. And since his death she has had no heart for joy or profit, so much did she regret and still regrets him, and longs for vengeance, if her power were equal to her will, on those who killed him. But never has our present king [Henri IV.] consented to it, whatever prayer she makes, she holding Mme. de Montpensier guilty of the death of the king, her brother, abhorring her like the plague, and going so far as to tell her before Madame, the king's sister, that neither Madame nor the king had any honest reason to love her, except that through this murder of the late king they held the rank they did hold. What a hunt! I hope to say more of this elsewhere; therefore am I silent now.

9. *Marguerite de Valois, Queen of Navarre.*

I must now speak somewhat of Marguerite, Queen of Navarre. Certainly she was not born daughter of a king of

France, nor did she bear the name, except that of Valois or d'Orléans, because, as M. du Tillet says in his Memoirs, the surname of France does not belong to any but the daughters of France; and if they are born before their fathers are kings they do not take it until after their said fathers' accession to the crown. Nevertheless this Marguerite, as the greatest persons of those days have said, was held to be daughter of France for her great virtues, although there was some wrong in putting her in that rank. That is why we place her here among the Daughters of France.[1]

She was a princess of very great mind and ability, both by nature and power of acquisition, for she gave herself to letters in her early years and continued to do so as long as she lived, liking and conversing with the most learned men in her brother's kingdom in the days of her grandeur and usually at Court. They all so honoured her that they called her their Mæcenas; and most of their books composed at that period were dedicated either to her brother, the king, who was also learned, or to her.

She herself composed well, and made a book which she entitled "La Marguerite des Marguerites" which is very fine and can still be found in print.[2] She often composed comedies and moralities, which were called in those days pastorals, and had them played and represented by the maids of honour at her Court.

She was fond of composing spiritual songs, for her heart was much given to God; and for that reason she bore as her device a marigold, which is the flower that has the most affinity with the sun of any there is, whether in similitude of its leaves to rays, or by reason of the fact that usually it

[1] She was daughter of Charles, Duc d'Angoulême, and Louise de Savoie, great-granddaughter of Charles V., and sister of François I. — Tr.

[2] See Appendix.

turns to the sun wherever it goes from east to west, opening and closing according to its rise and its setting. Also she arranged this device with the words: *Non inferiora secutus* — "It stops not for earthly things;" meaning that she aimed and directed all her actions, thoughts, will, and affections to that great sun on high which is God; and for that reason was she suspected of being of Luther's religion. But out of the respect and love she bore the king, her brother, who loved her only and called her his darling [his *mignonne*] she never made any profession or semblance of that religion; and if she believed it she kept it in her soul very secretly, because the king hated it much, saying that that, and all other new sects, tended more to the destruction of kingdoms, monarchies, and civil dominions than to the edification of souls.

The great sultan, Solyman, said the same; declaring that however much it upset many points of the Christian religion and the pope, he could not like it, "because," he said, "the monks of this new faith are only seditious mischief-makers, who can never rest unless they are stirring up trouble." That is why King François, a wise prince if ever there was one, foreseeing the miseries that would come in many ways to Christianity, hated these people and was rather rigorous in burning alive the heretics of his day. Nevertheless, he favoured the Protestant princes of Germany against the emperor. That is how these great kings govern as they please.

I have heard a trustworthy person relate how the Connétable de Montmorency, in the days of his greatest favour, discoursing of this with the king, made no difficulty or scruple in telling him that if he wanted to exterminate the heretics of his kingdom he would have to begin with his Court and his nearest relations, naming the queen, his

sister. To which the king replied: "Do not speak of her; she loves me too well. She will never believe except as I believe, and never will she take any religion prejudicial to my State." After which, hearing of it, she never liked M. le connétable, and helped much in his disfavour and banishment from Court. Now it happened that the day on which her daughter, the Princesse de Navarre, was married to the Duc de Clèves at Chastellerault, the bride was so weighted with jewels and with her gown of gold and silver stuff that her body was too weak to walk to church; on which the king commanded the connétable to take his niece in his arms and carry her to the church; which amazed the Court very much; a duty like that being little suitable and honourable for a connétable, and might have been given very well to another. But the Queen of Navarre was in no wise displeased and said: "The man who tried to ruin me with my brother now serves to carry my daughter to church."

I have this story from the person I mentioned, who added that M. le connétable was much displeased at this duty and showed great vexation at being made such a spectacle, saying: "It is all over with my favour, I bid it farewell." And so it proved; for after the *fête* and the wedding dinner, he had his dismissal and departed immediately. I heard this from my brother, who was then a page at Court and saw the whole mystery and remembered it well, for he had a good memory. Possibly I am wearisome in making this digression; but as it came to my remembrance, may I be forgiven.

To speak again of the learning of this queen: it was such that the ambassadors who spoke with her were greatly delighted, and made reports of it to their nations when they returned; in this she relieved the king, her brother, for they always went to her after paying their chief embassy

to him; and often when great affairs were concerned they intrusted them to her. While they awaited the final and complete decision of the king she knew well how to entertain and content them with fine discourse, in which she was opulent, besides being very clever in pumping them; so that the king often said she assisted him much and relieved him a great deal. Therefore was it discussed, as I have heard tell, which of the two sisters served their brothers best, — one the Queen of Hungary, the emperor; the other, Marguerite, King François; the one by the effects of war, the other by the efforts of her charming spirit and gentleness.

When King François was so ill in Spain, being a prisoner, she went to him like a good sister and friend, under the safe-conduct of the emperor; and finding her brother in so piteous a state that had she not come he would surely have died, and knowing his nature and temperament far better than all his physicians, she treated him and caused him to be treated so well, according to her knowledge of him, that she cured him. Therefore the king often said that without her he would have died, and that forever would he recognize his obligation and love her for it; as he did, until his death. She returned him the same love, so that I have heard say how, hearing of his last illness, she said these words: "Whoever comes to my door and announces the cure of the king, my brother, whoever may be that messenger, be he lazy, ill-humoured, dirty or unclean, I will kiss him as the neatest prince and gentleman of France, and if he needs a bed to repose his laziness upon, I will give him mine and lie myself on the hardest floor for the good news he brings me." But when she heard of his death her lamentations were so great, her regrets so keen, that never after did she recover from them, nor was she ever as before.

When she was in Spain, as I have heard from my relations, she spoke to the emperor so bravely and so honestly on the bad treatment he had given to the king, her brother, that he was quite amazed; for she showed him plainly the ingratitude and felony he had practised, he, a vassal, to his seigneur in relation to Flanders; after which she reproached him for his hardness of heart and want of pity to so great and good a king; saying that to use him in this way would never win a heart so noble and royal and so sovereign as that of her brother; and that if he died of such treatment, his death would not remain unpunished; he having children who would some day, when they grew up, take signal vengeance.

Those words, pronounced so bravely and with such deep anger, gave the emperor much to think of, — so much indeed that he softened and visited the king and promised him many fine things, which he did not, nevertheless, perform at this time.

Now, if the queen spoke so well to the emperor, she spoke still more strongly to his council, of whom she had audience. There she triumphed in speaking and haranguing nobly with that good grace she never was deprived of; and she did so well with her fine speech that she made herself more pleasing than odious and vexatious, — all the more, withal, that she was young, beautiful, the widow of M. d'Alençon, and in the flower of her age; which is very suitable to move and bend such hard and cruel persons. In short, she did so well that her reasons were thought good and pertinent, and she was held in great esteem by the emperor, his council, and the Court. Nevertheless he meant to play her a trick, because, not reflecting on the expiration of her safe-conduct and passport, she took no heed that the time was elapsing. But getting wind that the emperor as

soon as her time had expired meant to arrest her, she, always courageous, mounted her horse and rode in eight days a distance that should have taken fifteen; which effort so well succeeded that she reached the frontier of France very late on the evening of the day her passport expired, circumventing thus his Imperial Majesty [*Sa Cæsarée Majesté*] who would no doubt have kept her had she overstayed her safe-conduct by a single day. She sent him word and wrote him this, and quarrelled with him for it when he passed through France. I heard this tale from Mme. la seneschale, my grandmother, who was with her at that time as lady of honour.

During the imprisonment of the king, her brother, she greatly assisted Mme. la regente, her mother, in governing the kingdom, contenting the princes, the grandees, and winning over the nobility; because she was very accessible, and so won the hearts of many persons by the fine qualities she had in her.

In short, she was a princess worthy of a great empire; besides being very kind, gentle, gracious, charitable, a great alms-giver and disdaining none. Therefore was she, after her death, regretted and bemoaned by everybody. The most learned persons vied with each other in making her epitaph in Greek, Latin, French, Italian; so much so that there is still a book of them extant, quite complete and very beautiful.

This queen often said to this one and that one who discoursed of death, and eternal happiness after it: "All that is true, but we shall stay a long time under ground before we come to that." I have heard my mother, who was one of her ladies, and my grandmother, who was her lady of honour, say that when they told her in the extremity of her illness that she must die, she thought those words most

bitter, and repeated what I have told above; adding that she was not so old but that she might live on for many years, being only fifty-two or fifty-three years old. She was born under the 10th degree of Aquarius, when Saturn was parted from Venus by quaternary decumbiture, on the 10th of April, 1492, at ten in the evening; having been conceived in the year 1491 at ten hours before mid-day and seventeen minutes, on the 11th of July. Good astrologers can make their computations upon that. She died in Béarn, at the castle of Audaus [Odos] in the month of December, 1549. Her age can be reckoned from that. She was older than the king, her brother, who was born at Cognac, September 12th, year 1494, at nine in the evening, under the 21st degree of Gemini, having been conceived in the year 1493, December 10th, at ten o'clock in the morning, became king January 11th, 1514 [1515 new style], and died in 1547.

This queen took her illness by looking at a comet which appeared at the death of Pope Paul III.; she herself thought this, but possibly it only seemed so; for suddenly her mouth was drawn a little sideways; which her physician, M. d'Escuranis, observing, he took her away, made her go to bed, and treated her; for it was a chill [*caterre*], of which she died in eight days, after having well prepared herself for death. She died a good Christian and a Catholic, against the opinion of many; but as for me, I can affirm, being a little boy at her Court with my mother and my grandmother, that we never saw any act to contradict it; indeed, having retired to a monastery of women in Angoumois, called Tusson, on the death of the king, her brother, where she made her retreat and stayed the whole summer, she built a fine house there, and was often seen to do the office of abbess, and chant masses and vespers with the nuns in the choir.

I have heard tell of her that, one of her waiting-maids whom she liked much being near to death, she wished to see her die; and when she was at the last gasp and rattle of death, she never stirred from beside her, gazing so fixedly upon her face that she never took her eyes away from it until she died. Some of her most privileged ladies asked her why she took such interest in seeing a human being pass away; to which she answered that, having heard so many learned persons discourse and say that the soul and spirit issued from the body at the moment of death, she wished to see if any wind or noise could be perceived, or the slightest resonance, but she had noticed nothing. She also gave a reason she had heard from the same learned persons, when she asked them why the swan sang so well before its death; to which they answered it was for love of souls, that strove to issue through its long throat. In like manner, she said, she had hoped to see issue or feel resound and hear that soul or spirit as it departed; but she did not. And she added that if she were not firm in her faith she should not know what to think of this dislodgment and departure of the soul from the body; but she believed in God and in what her Church commanded, without seeking further in curiosity; for, in truth, she was one of those ladies as devotional as could ever be seen; who had God upon her lips and feared Him also.

In her gay moments she wrote a book which is entitled *Les Nouvelles de la Reine de Navarre*, in which we find a style so sweet and fluent, so full of fine discourse and noble sentences that I have heard tell how the queen-mother and Madame de Savoie, being young, wished to join in writing tales themselves in imitation of the Queen of Navarre; for they knew that she was writing them. But when they saw hers, they felt such disgust that theirs could not approach

them that they put their writings in the fire, and would not let them be seen; a great pity, however, for both being very witty, nothing that was not good and pleasant could have come from such great ladies, who knew many good stories.

Queen Marguerite composed these tales mostly in her litter travelling through the country; for she had many other great occupations in her retirement. I have heard this from my grandmother, who always went with her in her litter as lady of honour, holding the inkstand while she wrote, which she did most deftly and quickly, more quickly than if she had dictated. There was no one in the world so clever at making devices and mottoes in French, Latin, and other languages, of which we have a quantity in our house, on the beds and tapestries, composed by her. I have said enough about her at this time; elsewhere I shall speak of her again.

The Queen of Navarre, sister of François I., has of late years frequently occupied the minds of literary and learned men. Her Letters have been published with much care; in the edition given of the Poems of François I. she is almost as much concerned as her brother, for she contributes a good share to the volume. At the present time [1853] the Société des Bibliophiles, considering that there was no correct edition of the tales and *Nouvelles* of this princess, — because, from the first, the early editors have treated the royal author with great freedom, so that it was difficult to find the true text of that curious work, more famous than read, — have assumed the task of filling this literary vacuum. The Society has trusted one of its most conscientious members, M. Le Roux de Lincy, with compiling an edition from the original manuscripts; and, moreover, wishing to give to

this publication a stamp of solidity, that air of good old quality so pleasing to amateurs, they have sought for old type, obtaining some from Nuremberg dating back to the first half of the eighteenth century, and have caused to be cast the necessary quantity, which has been used in printing the present work, and will serve in future for other publications of this Society. The *Nouvelles de la Reine de Navarre* are presented, with a portrait of the author and a fac-simile of her signature, in a grave, neat, and elegant manner. Let us therefore thank this Society, composed of lovers of fine books, for having thus applied their good taste and munificence, and let us come to the study of the personage whom they have aided us to know.

Marguerite de Valois, the first of the three Marguerites of the sixteenth century, does not altogether resemble the reputation made of her from afar. Born at the castle of Angoulême, April 11, 1492, two years before her brother, who will in future be François I., she received from her mother, Louise de Savoie, early a widow, a virtuous and severe education. She learned Spanish, Italian, Latin, and later, Hebrew and Greek. All these studies were not made at once, nor in her earliest youth. Contemporary of the great movement of the Renaissance, she shared in it gradually; she endeavoured to comprehend it fully, and to follow it in all its branches, as became a person of lofty and serious spirit, with a full and facile understanding and more leisure than if she had been born upon the throne. Brantôme presents her to us as "a princess of very great mind and ability, both by nature and power of acquisition." She continued to acquire as long as she lived; she protected with all her heart and with all her influence the learned and literary men of all orders and kinds; profiting by them and their intercourse for her own advantage, — a woman who could cope with

Marot in the play of verses as well as she could answer Erasmus on nobler studies.

We must not exaggerate, however; and the writings of Marguerite are sufficiently numerous to allow us to justly estimate in her the two distinct parts of originality and simple intelligence. As poet and writer her originality is of small account, or, to speak more precisely, she has none at all. Her intelligence, on the contrary, is great, active, eager, generous. There was in her day an immense movement of the human spirit, a Cause essentially literary and liberal, which filled all minds and hearts with enthusiasm as public policy did much later. Marguerite, young, open to all good and noble sentiments, to *virtue* under all its forms, grew passionate for this cause; and when her brother François came to the throne she told herself that it was her mission to be its good genius and interpreter beside him, and to show herself openly the patron and protectress of men who were exciting against themselves by their learned innovations much pedantic rancour and ill-will. It was thus that she allowed herself to be caught and won insensibly to the doctrines of the Reformers, which appealed to her, in the first instance, under a learned and literary form. Translators of Scripture, they only sought, it seemed to her, to propagate its spirit and make it better understood by pious souls; she enjoyed and favoured them in the light of learned men, and welcomed them as loving at the same time "good letters and Christ;" never suspecting any factious after-thought. And even after she appeared to be undeceived in the main, she continued to the last to plead for individuals to the king, her brother, with zeal and humanity.

The passion that Marguerite had for that brother dominated all else. She was his elder by two years and a half. Louise de Savoie, the young widow, was only fifteen or six-

teen years older than her daughter. These two women had, the one for her son the other for her brother, a love that amounted to worship; they saw in him, who was really to be the honour and crown of their house, a dauphin who would soon, when his reign was inaugurated at Marignano, become a glorious and triumphant Cæsar.

"The day of the Conversion of Saint Paul, January 25, 1515," says Madame Louise in her Journal, "my son was anointed and crowned in the church at Reims. For this I am very grateful to the Divine mercy, by which I am amply compensated for all the adversities and annoyances which came to me in my early years and in the flower of my youth. Humility has kept me company, and Patience has never abandoned me."

And a few months later, noting down with pride the day of Marignano [victory of François I. over the Swiss and the Duke of Milan, making the French masters of Lombardy], she writes in the transport of her heart:—

"September 13, which was Thursday, 1515, my son vanquished and destroyed the Swiss near Milan; beginning the combat at five hours after mid-day, which lasted all the night and the morrow till eleven o'clock before mid-day; and that very day I started from Amboise to go on foot to Notre-Dame-de-Fontaines, to commend to her what I love better than myself, my son, glorious and triumphant Cæsar, subjugator of the Helvetians.

"*Item.* That same day, September 13, 1515, between seven and eight in the evening, was seen in various parts of Flanders a flame of fire as long as a lance, which seemed as though it would fall upon the houses, but was so bright that a hundred torches could not have cast so great a light."

Marguerite, learned and enlightened as she was, must have believed the presage, for she writes the same words as

her mother. Married at seventeen years of age to the Duc d'Alençon, an insignificant prince, she gave all her devotion and all her soul to her brother; therefore when, in the tenth year of his reign, the disaster of Pavia took place (February 25, 1525), and Marguerite learned the destruction of the French army and the captivity of their king, we can conceive the blow it was to her and to her mother. While Madame Louise, appointed regent of the kingdom, showed strength and courage in that position, we can follow the thoughts of Marguerite in the series of letters she wrote to her brother, which M. Genin has published. Her first word is written to console the captive and reassure him: "Madame (Louise de Savoie) has felt such doubling of strength that night and day there is not a moment lost for your affairs; therefore you need have no anxiety or pain about your kingdom or your children." She congratulates herself on knowing that he has fallen into the hands of so kind and generous a victor as the Viceroy of Naples, Charles de Lannoy; she entreats him, for the sake of his mother, to take care of his health: "I have heard that you mean to do this Lent without eating flesh or eggs, and sometimes fast altogether for the honour of God. Monseigneur, as much as a very humble sister can implore you, I entreat you not to do this, but consider how fish goes against you; also believe that if you do it Madame has sworn to do so too; and I shall have the sorrow to see you both give way."

Marguerite, about this time, sees her husband, who escaped from Pavia, die at Lyon. She mourns him; but after the first two days she surmounts her grief and conceals it from her mother the regent, because, not being able to render services herself, she should think she was most unfortunate, she says, to hinder and shake the spirit of her who can do such great things. When Marguerite is selected to

go to her brother in Spain (September, 1525) and work for his deliverance, her joy is great. At last she can be useful to this brother, whom she considers "as him whom God has left her in this world; father, brother, and husband." She mingles and varies in many ways those names of master, brother, king, which she accumulates upon him, without their sufficing to express her affection, so full and sincere is it: "Whatever it may be, *even to casting to the winds the ashes of my bones to do you service*, nothing can seem to me strange, or difficult, or painful, but always consolation, repose, honour." Such expressions, exaggerated in others, are true on Marguerite's lips.

She succeeded but little in her mission to Spain; there, where she sought to move generous hearts and make their fibre of honour vibrate, she found crafty dissimulation and policy. She was allowed to see her brother for a short time only; he himself exacted that she should shorten her stay, thinking her more useful to his interests in France. She tears herself from him in grief, above all at leaving him ill, and as low as possible in health. Oh! how she longed to return, to stay beside him, and to take the "place of lacquey beside his cot." It is her opinion that he should buy his liberty at any price; let him return, no matter on what conditions; no terms can be bad provided she sees him back in France, and none can be good if he is still in Spain. As soon as she sets foot in France she is received, she tells him, as a forerunner, "as the Baptist of Jesus Christ." Arriving at Béziers, she is surrounded by crowds. "I assure you, Monseigneur," she writes, "that when I tried to speak of you to two or three, the moment I named the king everybody pressed round to listen to me; in short, I am constrained to talk of you, and I never close my speech without an accompaniment of tears from persons of all classes."

Such was at that time the true grief of France for the loss of her king.

As Marguerite advances farther into the country she observes more and more the absence of the master; the kingdom is "like a body without a head, living to recover you, dying in the sense that you are absent." As for herself, seeing this, she thinks that her toils in Spain were more endurable than this stillness in France, "where fancies torment me more than efforts."

In general, all Marguerite's letters do the greatest honour to her soul, to her generous, solid qualities, filled with affection and heartiness. Romance and drama have many a time expended themselves, as was indeed their right, on this captivity in Madrid and on those interviews of François I. and his sister, which lend themselves to the imagination; but the reading of these simple, devoted letters, laying bare their feelings, tells more than all. Here is a charming passage in which she smiles to him and tries, on her return, to brighten the captive with news of his children. François I. at this date had five, all of whom, with one exception, were recovering from the measles.

"And now," says Marguerite, "they are all entirely cured and very healthy; M. le dauphin does marvels in studying, mingling with his studies a hundred other exercises; and there is no question now of temper, but of all the virtues. M. d'Orléans is nailed to his book and says he wants to be wise; but M. d'Angoulême knows more than the others, and does things that may be thought prophetic as well as childish; which, Monseigneur, you would be amazed to hear of. Little Margot is like me, and will not be ill; they tell me here she has very good grace, and is growing much handsomer than Mademoiselle d'Angoulême ever was."

Mademoiselle d'Angoulême is herself; and the little Margot who promises to be prettier than her aunt and godmother, is the second of the Marguerites, who is presently to be Duchesse de Savoie.

As a word has now been said about the beauty of Marguerite de Navarre, what are we to think about it? Her actual portrait lessens the exaggerated idea we might form of it from the eulogies of that day. Marguerite resembles her brother. She has his slightly aquiline and very long nose, the long, soft, and shrewd eye, the lips equally long, refined and smiling. The expression of her countenance is that of shrewdness on a basis of kindness. Her dress is simple; her *cotte* or gown is made rather high and flat, without any frippery, and is trimmed with fur; her mob-cap, low upon her head, encircles the forehead and upper part of the face, scarcely allowing any hair to be seen. She holds a little dog in her arms. The last of the Marguerites, that other Queen of Navarre, first wife of Henri IV., was the queen of modes and fashions in her youth; she gave the tone. Our Marguerite did nothing of all that; she left that rôle to the Duchesse d'Étampes and her like. Marot himself, when praising her, insists particularly on her characteristic of gentleness, "which effaces the beauty of the most beautiful," on her chaste glance and that *frank speech, without disguise, without artifice*. She was sincere, "joyous, laughing readily," fond of all honest gayety, and when she wanted to say a lively word, too risky in French, she said it in Italian or in Spanish. In other respects, full of religion, morality, and sound training; justifying the magnificent eulogy bestowed upon her by Erasmus. That wise monarch of literature, that true emperor of the Latinity of his period, consoling Marguerite at the moment when she was under the blow of the disaster of Pavia, writes to her: "I have

long admired and loved in you many eminent gifts of God: prudence worthy of a philosopher, chastity, moderation, piety, invincible strength of soul, and a wonderful contempt for all perishable things. Who would not consider with admiration, in the sister of a great king, qualities which we can scarcely find in priests and monks?" In this last stroke upon the monks we catch the slightly satirical tone of the Voltaire of those times. Remark that in this letter addressed to Marguerite in 1525, and in another letter which closely followed the first, Erasmus thanks and congratulates her on the services she never ceases to render to the common cause of literature and tolerance.

These services rendered by Marguerite were real; but that which is a subject of eulogy on the part of some is a source of blame on the part of others. Her brother having married her for the second time, in 1527, to Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre, she held her little Court at Pau which thenceforth became the refuge and haven of all persecuted persons and innovators. "She favoured Calvinism, which she abandoned in the end," says Président Hénault, "and was the cause of the rapid progress of that dawning sect." It is very true that Marguerite, open to all the literary and generous sentiments of her time, behaved as, later, a person on the verge of '89 might have favoured liberty with all her strength without wishing or even perceiving the approaching revolution. She did at this period as did the whole Court of France, which, merely following fashion, the progress of Letters, the pleasure of understanding Holy Scripture and of chanting the Psalms in French, came near to being Lutheran or Calvinistic without knowing it. Their first awakening was on a morning (October 19, 1534) when they read, affixed to every wall in Paris, those bloody placards against the Catholic faith. The imprudent ones

of the party had fired the train before the appointed time. Marguerite, good and loyal, knowing nothing of parties and judging only by honourable persons and the men of letters of her acquaintance, leaned to the belief that those infamous placards were the act, not of Protestants, but of those who sought a pretext to compromise and persecute them. Charitable and humane, she never ceased to act upon her brother in the direction of clemency.

It was thus that on two or three occasions she tried to save the unfortunate Berquin, who persisted in dogmatizing, and was, in spite of all the princess's efforts with the king, her brother, burned on the Grève, April 24, 1529. To read the passages of the letters in which she commends Berquin, one would think she espoused his opinions and his beliefs; but we must not ask too much rigour and precision of Marguerite in her ideas and their expression. There are moments, no doubt, in reading her verse or her prose, when we might think that she had fully accepted the Reformation; she reproduces its language, even its jargon. Then, side by side, we see her become once more, or rather continue to be, a believer after the manner of the best Catholics of her age, given to all their practices, and not fearing to couple with them her inconsistencies. Montaigne, who had great esteem for her, could not prevent himself from noting, for example, her singular reflection about a young and very great prince, whose history she relates in her *Nouvelles*, and who has all the look of being François I.; she shows him on his way to a rendezvous that is not edifying, and, to shorten his way, he obtains permission of the porter of a monastery to cross its enclosure. On his return, being no longer so hurried, the prince stops to pray in the church of the cloister; "for," she says, "although he led the life of which I tell you, he was a prince who loved and feared God."

Montaigne takes up that remark, and asks what good she found at such a moment in that idea of divine protection and favour. "This is not the only proof to be adduced," he adds, "that women are not fitted to treat of matters of theology."

And, in truth, Marguerite was no theologian; she was a person of real piety, heart, knowledge, and humanity, who mingled with her serious life a happy, enjoying temperament, making a most sincere harmony of it all; which surprises us a little in the present day. Brantôme relates (in his "Lives of Illustrious Captains") an anecdote of Marguerite which paints her very well in this connection and measure. A brother of Brantôme, the Capitaine de Bourdeille, had known at Ferrara in the household of the duchess of that country (daughter of Louis XII.) a French lady, Mlle. de La Roche, by whom he had made himself beloved. He brought her back with him to France, and she went to the Court of the Queen of Navarre, where she died, he no longer caring for her. One day, three months after this death, Capitaine de Bourdeille passed through Pau, and having gone to pay his respects to the Queen of Navarre as she returned from vespers, was well received by her; and talking from topic to topic as they walked, the princess led him quietly through the church to the spot where the tomb of the lady he had loved and deserted was placed. "Cousin," she said, "do you not feel something moving beneath your feet?" "No, madame," he replied. "But reflect a moment, cousin," she said. "Madame, I do reflect," he answered, "but I feel no movement, for I am walking on solid stone." "Then I inform you," said the queen, without keeping him further in suspense, "that you stand upon the grave and body of that poor Mlle. de La Roche, who is buried beneath you, whom you loved so much; and, since souls have feelings after death, it

cannot be doubted that so honest a being, dying of coldness, felt your step above her; and though you felt nothing, because of the thickness of that stone, she was moved, and conscious of your presence. Now, inasmuch as it is a pious deed to remember the dead, I request you to give her a *Pater noster*, an *Ave Maria*, and a *De Profundis*, and to sprinkle her with holy water; you will thus obtain the name of a faithful lover and a good Christian." She left him and went away, that he might fulfil with a collected mind the pious ceremonies that were due to the dead. I do not know why Brantôme adds the remark that, in his opinion, the princess said and did all this more from good grace and by way of conversation than from conviction; it seems to me, on the contrary, that there was belief as well as grace, the conviction of a woman of delicacy and a pious soul, and that all is there harmonized.

In Marguerite's own time there were not lacking those who blamed her for the protection she gave to the lettered friends of the Reformation; she found denunciators in the Sorbonne; she found them equally at Court. The Connétable de Montmorency, speaking to the king of the necessity of purging the kingdom of heretics, added that he must begin with the Court and his nearest relations, naming the Queen of Navarre. "Do not speak of her," said the king, "she loves me too well; she will believe only what I believe; she will never be of any religion prejudicial to my State." That saying sums up the truth: Marguerite could be of no other religion than that of her brother; and Bayle has very well remarked, in a fine page of his criticism, that the more we show that Marguerite was not united in doctrine with the Protestants, the more we are forced to recognize her generosity, her loftiness of soul, and her pure humanity. By her womanly instinct she comprehended tolerance, like L'Hôpital,

like Henri IV., like Bayle himself. From the point of view of the State there may have been some danger in the direction of this tolerance, too confiding and too complete; it so appeared, in Marguerite's time, at this critical moment when the religion of the State, and with it the constitution of those days, was in danger of overthrow. Nevertheless, it is good that there should be such souls,—in love, before all else, with humanity; who insinuate, in the long run, gentleness into public morals and into laws and justice hitherto cruel; it is good because later, in epochs when severity begins again, repression, while it may be commanded by reasons of policy, is still forced to reckon with that spirit of humanity introduced into customs, and with acquired tolerance. Thus the rigour of present ages, softened and tempered as it now is by general manners and morals, would have been a blessing in past centuries; these are points gained in civil life which are never lost afterwards.

The *Contes et Nouvelles* of the Queen of Navarre have nothing, as we can readily believe, that is much out of keeping or contradictory with her life and the habitual character of her thoughts. M. Genin has already made that judicious remark, and an attentive reading will only justify it. Those Tales are neither the gayeties nor the sins of youth; she wrote them at a ripe age, for the most part in her litter while travelling, and by way of amusement—but the amusement had its serious side. Death prevented her from concluding them; instead of the seven Days which we actually have, she intended to make ten, like Boccaccio; she wished to give, not an *Heptameron*, but a French *Decameron*. In her prologue she supposes that several persons of condition, French and Spanish, having met, in the month of September, at the baths of Cauterets, in the Pyrenees, separate after a few weeks; the Spaniards returning as best they can across

the mountains, the French delayed on their way by floods caused by the heavy rains. A certain number of these travellers, men and women, after divers adventures more extraordinary than agreeable, find themselves again in company at the Abbey of Notre-Dame-de-Serrance, and there, as the river Gave is not fordable, they decide to build a bridge. "The abbé," says the narrator, "who was very glad they should make this outlay, because the number of pilgrims would thus be increased, furnished the workmen, but not a penny to the costs, such was his avarice. The workmen declaring that they could not build the bridge under ten or a dozen days, the company, half men, half women, began to get very weary." It became necessary to find some "pleasant and virtuous" occupation for those ten days, and for this they consulted a certain Dame Oisille, the oldest of the company.

Dame Oisille responded in a manner most edifying: "My children, you ask me a thing that I find very difficult, namely: to teach you a pastime which shall deliver you from ennui. Having searched for this remedy all my life, I have found but one, and that is the reading of Holy Epistles, in which will be found the true and perfect joy of the soul, from which proceeds the repose and health of the body." But the joyous company cannot keep wholly to so austere a system, and it is agreed that the time shall be divided between the sacred and the profane. Early in the morning the company assembled in the chamber of Dame Oisille to share in her moral readings, and from there they went to mass. They dined at *ten* o'clock, after which, having retired each to his or her chamber for private affairs, they met again about mid-day on the meadow: "And, if it please you, every day, from mid-day till four o'clock, we went through the beautiful meadow, on the banks of the river du Gave, where the trees

are so leafy that the sun cannot pierce the shadows, or heat the coolness; and there, seated at our ease, each told some story he had known, or else heard from a trustworthy person." For it was well understood that nothing should be told that was not *true;* narrators must be content to disguise, if necessary, the names of both persons and places. The company numbered ten; as many men as women, and each told a story daily; so it followed that in ten days the hundred tales would be completed. Every afternoon, at four o'clock, a bell was rung, giving notice that it was time to go to vespers; the company went, — not, however, without sometimes obliging the monks to wait for them; to which delay the latter lent themselves with very good grace. Thus rolled the time away, no one believing that he or she had passed the limits of sanctioned gayety or committed any sin.

The Tales of the Queen of Navarre have nothing absolutely out of keeping with this framework and design. Each story has a moral, a precept, either well or ill deduced; each is related to support some maxim, some theory, on the pre-eminence of one or other of the sexes, on the nature and essence of love, with examples or proofs (often very contestable) of what is advanced. Prudery apart, there is not much in these tales that is really charming. The subjects are those of the time. At moments we exclaim with Dame Oisille: "Good God! shall we never get out of these stories of monks?" We are made aware that even the honourable men and well-bred women of those days were contemporaries of Rabelais. However, it all turns to a good end. There is wit and subtlety in the discussions which serve as epilogue or prologue to the different tales. Most of the histories, being true, are without art, composition, or *dénouement.* The Queen of Navarre has been very little imitated in the tales and verses made since her day; in

fact, she lends herself poorly to imitation. Only once does La Fontaine put her under contribution, but then in what is, as I think, the most piquant of her writings, namely: the tale of *La Servante justifiée.* In Marguerite's story a merchant, a carpet-dealer, emancipates himself with another than his wife, and is discovered by a female neighbour. Fearing that the latter will gabble, the merchant, "who knew how to give any colour to carpets," arranges matters in such a way that his wife is induced of her own accord to walk to the same place; so that when the gossiping neighbour comes to tell the wife what she has seen, the latter replies, "Hey! my crony, but that was I." This "that was I" repeated many times and in varying tones, becomes comical, like the sayings of the farce called *Patelin,* or a scene of Regnard; there are, however, not many such sayings in Marguerite's Tales.

A question which arises on the reading of these *Nouvelles,* the image and faithful reproduction of the good society of that day, is on the singularity that the tone of conversation should have varied so much among honourable persons at different epochs before it settled down upon the basis of true delicacy and decency. Elegant conversation dates much farther back than we suppose; polished society began much earlier than we think. The character of conversation as we now understand it in society, and that which specially distinguishes it among moderns, is that women are admitted to it; and this it was that led, during the finest period of the middle ages, to charming conversations in certain Courts of the South, and also in Normandy, in France, and in England. In those castles of the South where troubadours disported, and whence the echo of their sweet songs comes to us, where exquisite and ravishing stories were composed (like that of *Aucassin et Nicolette*), there

must have been all the delicacy, all the graces one could wish for in conversation. But taking matters as they appear to us at the end of the 15th century, we notice a mixture, a very perceptible struggle between purity and license, between coarseness and refinement. The pretty little romance *Jehan de Saintré*, in which the chivalric ideal is pictured from the start in the daintiest manner, and which assumes to give us a little code in action of politeness, courtesy and gallantry, — in a word, the complete education of a young equerry of the day, — this pretty romance is also full of pedantic precepts, essays on minute ceremonial, and towards the end it suddenly turns into gross sensuality and the triumph of the monk, after Rabelais.

The vein of license and wanton language never ceased its flow from the time it originated, disguising itself in brilliant moments and noble companies only to again unmask at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when it seems to borrow still further audacity from the Latin Renaissance. This was the time when virtuous women told and openly discoursed of tales *à la* Roquelaure. Such is the tone of the society which the *Nouvelles* of Marguerite of Navarre represent to us, all the more naïvely because their intention is in no way indecent. Nearly a century was needed to reform this vice of taste; it was necessary that Mme. de Rambouillet and her daughter should come to reprimand and school the Court, that professors of good taste and polite language, like Mlle. de Scudéry and the Chevalier de Méré, should apply themselves for years to preach decorum; and even then we shall find many backslidings and vestiges of coarseness in the midst of even their refinement and formalism.

The noble moment is that when, by some sudden change of season, intellects and minds are spread, all of a sudden,

in a richer and more equal manner over a whole generation of vigorous souls who then return eagerly to that which is natural, and give themselves up to it without restraint. That noble moment came in the middle of the seventeenth century, and nothing can be imagined comparable to the conversations of the youth of the Condés, the La Rochefoucaulds, the Retzes, the Saint-Evremonds, the Sévignés, the Turennes. What perfect hours were those when Mme. de La Fayette talked with Madame Henriette, lying after dinner on the cushions! Thus we come, across the greatest of centuries, to Mme. de Caylus, the smiling niece of Mme. de Maintenon, to that airy perfection where the mind without reflecting about it, denies itself nothing and observes all.

In the second half of the seventeenth century no one but Mme. Cornuel was allowed to use coarse language and be forgiven because of the spicy wit with which she seasoned it. At all times virtuous women must have heard and listened to more than they repeated; but the decisive moment (which needs to be noted) is that when they ceased to say unseemly things and fix them in writing without perceiving that they themselves were lacking in a virtue. This moment is what Queen Marguerite, as a romance-writer and maker of *Nouvelles,* had not the art to divine.

As a poet she has nothing more than facility. She imitates and reproduces the various forms of poesy in use at that date. It is told how she often employed two secretaries, one to write down the French verses she composed impromptu, the other to transcribe her letters.

Marguerite died at the Castle of Odos in Bigorre, December 21, 1549, in her fifty-eighth year; in yielding her last breath she cried out three times: "Jesus!" She was the mother of Jeanne d'Albret.

Such as I have shown her as a whole, endeavouring not to

force her features and to avoid all exaggeration, she deserves that name of *gentil esprit* [charming spirit] which has been so universally awarded to her; she was the worthy sister of François I., the worthy patron of the Renaissance, the worthy grandmother of Henri IV., as much for her mercy as for her joyousness, and one likes to address her, in the halo that surrounds her, these verses which her memory calls forth and which blend themselves so well with our thought of her: —

"Spirits, charming and lightsome, who have been, from all time, the grace and the honour of this land of France — ye who were born and played in those iron ages issuing from barbaric horrors; who, passing through cloisters, were welcomed there; the joyous soul of burgher vigils and the gracious fêtes of castles; ye who have blossomed often beside the throne, dispersing the weariness of pomps, giving to victory politeness, and recovering your smiles on the morrow of reverses; ye who have taken many forms, tricksome, mocking, elegant, or tender, facile ever; ye who have never failed to be born again at the moment you were said to have vanished — the ages for us have grown stern, reason is more and more accredited, leisure has fled; even our pleasures eagerness has turned into business, peace is without repose, so busy is she with the useful; to days serene come afterthoughts and cares to many a soul; — 't is now the hour, or nevermore, for awakening; the hour to once more grasp the world and again delight it, as, throughout all time, ye have known the way, eternally fresh and novel. Abandon not forever this land of France, O spirits glad and lightsome!"

SAINT-BEUVE, *Causeries du Lundi* (1852).

DISCOURSE VII.

OF VARIOUS ILLUSTRIOUS LADIES.[1]

1. *Isabelle d'Autriche, wife of Charles IX., King of France [daughter of the Emperor Maximilian II.].*

We have had our Queen of France, Isabelle d'Autriche, who was married to King Charles IX., of whom it is everywhere said she was one of the best, the gentlest, the wisest, and most virtuous queens who reigned since kings and queens began to reign. I can say this, and every man who has ever seen or heard of her will say it with me, and not do wrong to others, but with the greatest truth. She was very beautiful, having the complexion of her face as fine and delicate as any lady of her Court, and very agreeable. Her figure was beautiful also, though it was of only medium height. She was extremely wise, and very virtuous and kind, never giving pain to others, no matter who, nor offending any by a single word; and as to that, she was very sober, speaking little, and then in Spanish.

She was most devout, but in no way bigoted, not showing her devotion by external acts too visible and too extreme, such as I have seen in some of our paternosterers; but, without failing in her ordinary hours of praying to God, she used them well, so that she did not need to borrow extraordinary ones. It is true, as I have heard her ladies tell, that when she was in bed and hidden, her curtains well-drawn, she would kneel on her knees, in her shift, and pray to God

[1] See Appendix.



Isabella of Austria.
wife of Charles IX

an hour and a half, beating her breast and macerating it in her great devotion. Which they did not see by her consent, and then not till her husband, King Charles, was dead; at which time, she having gone to bed and all her women withdrawn, one of them remained to sleep in her chamber; and this lady, hearing her sigh one night, bethought her of looking through the curtains and saw her in that state, and praying to God in that manner, and so continuing every night; until at last the waiting-woman, who was familiar with her, began to remonstrate, and told her she did harm to her health. On which the queen was angry at being discovered and advised, and wished to conceal what she did, commanding her to say no word of it, and, for that night, desisted; but the night after she made up for it, thinking that her women did not perceive what she did, whereas they saw and perceived her by her shadow thrown by the night-lamp filled with wax which she kept lighted on her bed to read and pray to God; though other queens and princesses kept theirs upon their sideboards. Such ways of prayer are not like those of hypocrites, who, wishing to make an appearance before the world, say their prayers and devotions publicly, mumbling them aloud, that others may think them devout and saintly.

Thus prayed our queen for the soul of the king, her husband, whom she regretted deeply, — making her plaints and regrets, not as a crazed and despairing woman, with loud outcries, wounding her face, tearing her hair, and playing the woman who is praised for weeping; but mourning gently, shedding her beautiful and precious tears so tenderly, sighing so softly and lowly, that we knew she restrained her grief, not to make pretence to the world of brave appearance (as I have seen some ladies do), but keeping in her soul her greatest anguish. Thus a torrent of water if

arrested is more violent than one that runs its ordinary course.

Here I am reminded to tell how, during the illness of the king, her lord and husband, he dying on his bed, and she going to visit him; suddenly she sat down beside him, not by his pillow as the custom is, but a little apart and facing him where he lay; not speaking to him, as her habit was, she held her eyes upon him so fixedly as she sat there you would have said she brooded over him in her heart with the love she bore him; and then she was seen to shed tears so quietly and tenderly that those who did not look at her would not have known it, drying her eyes while making semblance to blow her nose, causing pity to one (for I saw her) in seeing her so tortured without yielding to her grief or her love, and without the king perceiving it. Then she rose, and went to pray God for his cure; for she loved and honoured him extremely, although she knew his amorous complexion, and the mistresses that he had both for honour and for pleasure. But she never for that gave him worse welcome, nor said to him any harsh words; bearing patiently her little jealousy, and the robbery he did to her. She was very proper and dignified with him; indeed it was fire and water meeting together, for as much as the king was quick, eager, fiery, she was cold and very temperate.

I have been told by those who know that after her widowhood, among her most privileged ladies who tried to give her consolation, there was one (for you know among a large number there is always a clumsy one) who, thinking to gratify her said: "Ah, madame, if God instead of a daughter had given you a son, you would now be queen-mother of the king, and your grandeur would be increased and strengthened." "Alas!" she replied, "do not say to me such grievous things. As if France had not troubles enough

without my producing her one which would complete her ruin! For, had I a son, there would be more divisions, troubles, seditions to gain the government during his minority; from that would come more wars than ever; and each would be trying to get his profit in despoiling the poor child, as they would have done to the late king, my husband, when he was little, if the queen-mother and her good servitors had not opposed it. If I had a son, I should be miserable to think I had conceived him and so caused a thousand maledictions from the people, whose voice is that of God. That is why I praise my God, and take with gratitude the fruit he gives me, whether it be to me myself for better or for worse."

Such was the goodness of this good princess towards the country and people to which she had been brought by marriage. I have heard related how, at the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew, she, knowing nothing of it nor even hearing the slightest breath of it, went to bed as usual, and did not wake till morning, at which time they told her of the fine drama that was playing [*le beau mystère qui se jouoit*]. "Alas!" she said quickly, "the king, my husband, does he know of it?" "Yes, madame," they answered her; "it was he himself who ordered it." "O my God!" she cried, "what is this? What counsellors are those who gave him such advice? My God! I implore thee, I beg thee to pardon him; for if thou dost not pity him, I fear that this offence is unforgivable." Then she asked for her prayer-book and began her orisons, imploring God with tears in her eyes.

Consider, I beg of you, the goodness and wisdom of this queen in not approving such a festival nor the deed then performed, although she had reasons to desire the total extermination of M. l'amiral and those of his religion, not only because they were contrary to hers, which she adored

and honoured before all else in the world, but because she saw how they troubled the States of the king, her husband; and also because the emperor, her father, had said to her when she parted from him to come to France: "My daughter, you will be queen of the finest, most powerful and greatest kingdom in the world, and for that I hold you to be very happy; but happier would you be if you could find that kingdom as flourishing as it once was; but instead you will find it torn, divided, weakened; for though the king, your husband, holds a good part of it, the princes and seigneurs of the Religion hold on their side the other part of it." And as he said to her, so she found it.

This queen having become a widow, many persons, men and women of the Court, the most clear-sighted that I know, were of opinion that the king, on his return from Poland, would marry her although she was his sister-in-law; for he could have done so by dispensation of the pope, who can do much in such matters, and above all for great personages because of the public good that comes of it. There were many reasons why this marriage should be made; I leave them to be deduced by high discoursers, without alleging them myself. But among others was that of recognizing by this marriage the great obligations the king had received from the emperor on his return from Poland and departure thence; for it cannot be doubted that if the emperor had placed the smallest obstacle in his way, he could never have left Poland or reached France safely. The Poles would have kept him had he not departed without bidding them farewell; and the Germans lay in wait for him on all sides to catch him (as they did that brave King Richard of England of whom we read in the chronicles); they would surely have taken him prisoner and held him for ransom, and perhaps worse; for they were bitter against him for the Saint-Bartholomew; or, at least,

the Protestant princes were. But, voluntarily and without ceremony, he threw himself in good faith upon the emperor, who received him very graciously and amiably, and with much honour and privilege as though they were brothers, and feasted him nobly; then, after having kept him several days, he conducted him himself for a day or two, giving him safe passage through his territory; so that King Henri, by his favour, reached Carinthia, the land of the Venetians, Venice, and then his own kingdom.

This was the obligation the king was under to the emperor; so that many persons, as I have said, were of opinion that King Henri III. would meet it by drawing closer their alliance. But at the time he went to Poland he saw at Blamont, in Lorraine, Mademoiselle de Vaudemont, Louise de Lorraine, one of the handsomest, best, and most accomplished princesses in Christendom, on whom he cast his eyes so ardently that he was soon in love, and in such a manner that (nursing his flame during the whole of his absence) on his return to France he despatched from Lyon M. du Gua, one of his prime favourites, to Lorraine, where he arranged and concluded the marriage between him and her very easily, and without altercation, as I leave you to think; because by the father and the daughter no such luck was expected, the one to be father-in-law of a king of France, and the daughter to be queen. Of her I shall speak elsewhere.

To return now to our little queen, who, disliking to remain in France for several reasons, especially because she was not recognized and endowed as she should have been, resolved to go and finish the remainder of her noble days with the emperor and empress, her father and mother. When there, the Catholic king being widowed of Queen Anne of Austria, own sister to Queen Isabelle, he desired to espouse the latter,

and sent to beg the empress, his own sister, to lay his proposals before her. But she would not listen to them, not the first, nor the second, nor the third time her mother the empress spoke of them; excusing herself on the honourable ashes of the king, her husband, which she would not insult by a second marriage, and also on the ground of too great consanguinity and close parentage between them, which might greatly anger God; on which the empress and her brother the king urged her to lay the matter before a very learned and eloquent Jesuit, who exhorted and preached to her as much as he could, not forgetting to quote all the passages of Holy and other Scripture, which might serve his purpose. But the queen confounded him quickly by other quotations as fine and more truthful, for, since her widowhood, she had given herself to the study of God's word; besides which, she told him her determined resolution, which was her most sacred defence, namely, not to forget her husband in a second marriage. On which the Jesuit was forced to leave her without gaining anything. But, being urged to return by a letter from the King of Spain, who would not accept the resolute answer of the princess, he treated her with rigorous words and even threats, so that she, not willing to lose her time contesting against him, cut him short by saying that if he meddled with her again she would make him repent it, and even went so far as to threaten to have him whipped in her kitchen. I have also heard, but I do not know if it be true, that this Jesuit having returned for the third time, she turned away and had him chastised for his presumption. I do not believe this; for she loved persons of holy lives, as those men are.

Such was the great constancy and noble firmness of this virtuous queen, which she kept to the end of her days, towards the venerated bones of the king her husband, which she

honoured incessantly with regrets and tears; and not being able to furnish more (for a fountain must in the end dry up) she succumbed, and died so young that she was only thirty-five years old at the time of her death. Loss most inestimable! for she might long have served as a mirror of virtue to the honest ladies of all Christendom.

If, of a surety, she manifested love to the king her husband, by her constancy, her virtuous continence, and her continual grief, she showed it still more in her behaviour to the Queen of Navarre, her sister-in-law; for, knowing her to be in a great extremity of famine in the castle of Usson in Auvergne, abandoned by most of her relations and by so many others whom she had obliged, she sent to her and offered her all her means, and so provided that she gave her half the revenue she received in France, sharing with her as if she had been her own sister; and they say Queen Marguerite would indeed have suffered severely without this great liberality of her good and beautiful sister. Wherefore she deferred to her much, and honoured and loved her so that scarcely could she bear her death patiently, as people do in the world, but took to her bed for twenty days, weeping continually with constant moans, and ever since has not ceased to regret and deplore her; expending on her memory most beautiful words, which she needed not to borrow from others, in order to praise her and to give her immortality. I have been told that Queen Isabelle composed and printed a beautiful book which touched on the word of God, and also another concerning histories of what happened in France during the time she was there. I know not if this be true, but I am assured of it, and also that persons have seen that book in the hands of the Queen of Navarre, to whom she sent it before she died, and who set great store by it, calling it a fine thing; and if so divine an oracle said so, we must believe it.

This is a summary of what I have to say of our good Queen Isabelle, of her goodness, her virtue, her continence, her constancy, and of her loyal love to the king her husband. And were it not her nature to be good and virtuous (I heard M. de Langeac, who was in Spain when she died, tell how the empress said to him: "That which was best among us is no more"), we might suppose that in all her actions Queen Isabelle sought to imitate her mother and her aunts.

2. *Jeanne d'Autriche, wife of Jean, Infante of Portugal, and mother of the king, Don Sebastian.*

This princess of Spain was of great beauty and very majestic, or she would not have been a Spanish princess; for a fine carriage and good grace always accompany the majesty of a Spanish woman. I had the honour of seeing her and talking with her rather privately, being in Spain on my way back from Portugal. I had gone to pay my respects to our Queen of Spain, Élisabeth of France, and was talking with her, she asking news both of France and Portugal, when they came to tell her that Madame la Princesse Jeanne was arriving. On which the queen said to me, "Do not stir, M. de Bourdeille. You will see a beautiful and honourable princess. It will please you to see her, and she will be very glad to see you and ask you news of the king her son, since you have lately seen him." Whereupon, the princess arrived, and I thought her very beautiful according to my taste, very well attired, and wearing on her head a Spanish toque of white crêpe coming low in a point upon her nose, and dressed as a Spanish widow, who wears silk usually. I admired and gazed upon her so fixedly that I was on the point of feeling ravished when the queen called me and said that Madame la princesse wished to hear from me news of her son the king; I had overheard her telling



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the princess that she was talking with a gentleman of her brother Court who had just come from Portugal.

On which I approached the princess, and kissed her gown in the Spanish manner. She received me very gently and intimately; and then began to ask me news of the king, her son, his behaviour, and what I thought of him; for at that time they were thinking to make a marriage between him and Madame Marguerite de France, sister of the king, and in these days Queen of Navarre. I told her everything; for at that time I spoke Spanish as well as, or better than French. Among her other questions she asked me this: "Was her son handsome, and whom did he resemble?" I told her he was certainly one of the handsomest princes of Christendom and resembled her in everything and was, in fact, the very image of her beauty; at which she gave a little smile and the colour came into her face, which showed much gladness at what I said. After talking with her some time they came to call the queen to supper, and the two princesses separated; the queen saying to me with a smile: "You have given her a great pleasure in what you said of the resemblance of her son."

And afterwards she asked me what I thought of her; whether I did not think her an honourable woman and such as she had described her to me, adding: "I think she would like much to marry the king, my brother [Charles IX.], and I should like it, too." She knew I should repeat this to the queen-mother on my return to Court, which was then at Arles in Provence; and I did so; but she said she was too old for him, old enough to be his mother. I told the queen-mother, however, what had been said to me in Spain, on good authority, namely: that the princess had said she was firmly resolved not to marry again unless with the King of France, and failing that to retire from the world. In fact, she had

so set her fancy on this high match and station, for her heart was very lofty, that she fully believed in attaining her end and contentment; otherwise she meant to end her days, as I have said, in a monastery, where she was already building a house for her retreat. Accordingly she kept this hope and belief very long in her mind, managing her widowhood sagely, until she heard of the marriage of the king to her niece [Isabelle], and then, all hope being lost, she said these words, or something like them, as I have heard tell: "Though the niece be more in her springtime and less weighed with years than the aunt, the beauty of the aunt, now in its summer, all made and formed by charming years, and bearing fruit, is worth far more than the fruit her youthful blooms give promise of; for the slightest misadventure will undo them, make them fall and perish, no more no less than the trees of spring, which with their lovely blooms promise fine fruits in summer; but an evil wind may blow and beat them down and nought be left but leaves. But let it be done to the will of God, with whom I now shall marry for all time, and not with others."

As she said, so she did, and led so good and holy a life apart from the world that she left to ladies, both great and small, a noble example to imitate. There may be some who have said: "Thank God she could not marry King Charles, for if she had done so she would have left behind the hard conditions of widowhood and resumed all the sweetness of marriage." That may be presumed. But may we not, on the other hand, presume that the great desire she showed the world to marry that great king was a form and manner of ostentation and Spanish pride, manifesting her lofty aspirations which she would not lower? — for seeing her sister Marie Empress of Austria and wishing to equal her she aspired to be Queen of France which is worth an empire — or more.

To conclude: she was, to my thinking, one of the most accomplished foreign princesses I have ever seen, though she may be blamed for retreating from the world more from vexation than devotion; but the fact remains that she did it; and her good and saintly end has shown in her I know not what of sanctity.

3. *Marie d'Autriche, wife of Louis, King of Hungary* [*sister of the Emperor Charles V.*].

Her aunt, Queen Marie of Hungary, did the same, although at a more advanced age, as much to retire from the world as to help the emperor, her brother, to serve God well in his retreat. This queen became a widow early, having lost King Louis, her husband, who was killed, very young, in a battle against the Turks, which he fought, not for good reason, but by persuasion and pertinacity of a cardinal who governed him much, assuring him that he must not distrust God and His just cause, for if there were but ten thousand Hungarians, they, being good Christians and fighting for God's quarrel, could make an end of a hundred thousand Turks; and that cardinal so urged and pushed him to the point that he fought and lost the battle, and in trying to retreat he fell into a marsh and was smothered. Such are the blunders of men who want to manage armies and do not know the business.

That was why the great Duc de Guise, after he was so greatly deceived on his journey to Italy, said frequently: "I love the Church of God, but I will never undertake an enterprise of war on the word or faith of a priest," — meaning by that to lay blame on Pope Paul IV., who had not kept the promises he made him with great and solemn words, and also on M. le Cardinal, his brother, who had sounded the ford as far as Rome, and lightly pushed his brother into it.

To return to our great Queen Marie; after this misfortune to her husband she was left a widow very young, very beautiful, as I have heard said by many persons who knew her, and as I judge myself from the portraits I have seen, which represent her without anything ugly to find fault with, unless it be her large, projecting mouth like that of the house of Austria; though it does not really come from the house of Austria, but from that of Bourgogne; for I have heard a lady of the Court of those times relate as follows: once when Queen Éléonore, passing through Dijon, went to make her devotions at the Chartreux monastery of that town, she visited the venerable sepulchres of her ancestors, the Ducs de Bourgogne, and was curious enough to have them opened, as many of our kings have done with theirs. She found them so well preserved that she recognized some by various signs, among others by their mouths, on which she suddenly cried out: "Ha! I thought we got our mouths from Austria, but I see we get them from Marie de Bourgogne and the Ducs de Bourgogne our ancestors. If I see my brother the emperor again, I shall tell him so, or else I shall send him word." The lady who was present told me that she heard this, and also that the queen spoke as if taking pleasure in it; as indeed she had reason to do; for the house of Bourgogne was fully worth that of Austria, since it came from a son of France, Philippe the Bold, and had gained much property and great generosities of valour and courage from him; for I believe there never were four greater dukes coming one after the other than those four Ducs de Bourgogne. People may blame me sometimes for exaggerating; but I ought to be readily pardoned, because I do not know the art of writing.

Our Queen Marie of Hungary was very beautiful and agreeable, though she was always a trifle masculine; but in

love she was none the worse for that, nor in war, which she took as her principal exercise. The emperor, her brother, knowing how fitted for war and very able she was, sent for her to come to him, and there invested her with the office which had belonged to her Aunt Marguerite of Flanders, who had governed the Low Countries with as much mildness as her successor now showed rigour. Indeed, so long as Madame Marguerite lived King François never turned his wars in that direction, though the King of England urged it on him; for he said that he did not wish to annoy that honest princess, who had shown herself so good to France and was so wise and virtuous, and yet so unfortunate in her marriages; the first of which was with King Charles VIII., by whom she was sent back very young to her father's house; another with the son of the King of Arragon named Jean, by whom she had a posthumous child who died as soon as he was born, and the third was with that handsome Duc Philibert of Savoie, by whom she had no issue; and for this reason she bore for her device the words *Fortune infortune, fors une.* She lies with her husband in that beautiful convent at Brou, which is so sumptuous, near the town of Bourg in Bresse, where I have seen it.[1]

Queen Marie of Hungary was of great assistance to the emperor, for he stood alone. It is true he had Ferdinand, king of the Romans, his brother; but he was forced to show front against that great Sultan Solyman; also he had upon his hands the affairs of Italy, which were then in combustion; of Germany, which were little better because of the Grand Turk; of Hungary; of Spain, which had revolted under M. de Chièvres; besides the Indies, the Low

[1] The tomb of Marguerite and Philibert is still to be seen in the beautiful church, and the above motto, which is carved upon it, has been the theme of much antiquarian discussion. — Tr.

Countries, Barbary, and France, the greatest burden of all. In short, I may say the whole world almost.

He made this sister Marie, whom he loved above everything, governor-general of all his Low Countries, where for the space of twenty-two or three years she served him so well that I know not how he could have done without her. For this he trusted her with all the affairs of the government, so that he himself, being in Flanders, left all to her, and the Council was held by her in her own house. It is true that she, being very wise and clever, deferred to him, and reported to him all that was done at the Council when he was not there, in which he took much pleasure.

She made great wars, sometimes by her lieutenants, sometimes in person, — always on horseback like a generous amazon. She was the first to light fires and conflagrations in France, — some in very noble houses and châteaux like that of Follembray, a beautiful and charming house built by our kings for their comfort and pleasure in hunting. The king took this with such wrath and displeasure that before long he returned her the change for it, and revenged it on her beautiful mansion of Bains, held to be a miracle of the world, shaming (if I may say so from what I have heard those say who saw it in its perfection) the seven wonders of the world renowned in antiquity. She fêted there the Emperor Charles and his whole Court, when his son, King Philip, came from Spain to Flanders to see him; on which occasion its magnificences were seen in such excellence and perfection that nothing was talked of at that time but *las fiestas de Bains,* as the Spaniards say. I remember myself that on the journey to Bayonne [where Catherine de' Medici met her daughter Élisabeth Queen of Spain], however great was the magnificence there presented, in tourneys, combats, masquerades, and money ex-

pended, nothing came up to *las fiestas de Bains;* so said certain old Spanish gentlemen who had seen them, and also as I saw it stated in a Spanish book written expressly about them; so that one could well say that nothing finer was ever seen, not even, begging pardon of Roman magnificence, the games of ancient times, barring the combats of gladiators and wild beasts. Except for them, the fêtes of Bains were finer and more agreeable, more varied, more general.

I would describe them here, according as I could borrow them from that Spanish book and as I heard of them from some who were present, even from Mme. de Fontaine, born Torcy, maid of honour at the time to Queen Éléonore; but I might be blamed for being too digressive. I will keep it for a *bonne bouche* another time, for the thing is worth it. Among some of the finest magnificences was this: Queen Marie had a great fortress built of brick, which was assaulted, defended, and succoured by six thousand foot-soldiers; cannonaded by thirty pieces of cannon, whether in the batteries or the defences, with the same ceremonies and doings as in real war; which siege lasted three days, and never was anything seen so fine, the emperor taking great pleasure in it.

You may be sure that if this queen played the sumptuous it was because she wanted to show her brother that if she held her States, pensions, benefits, even her conquests, through him, all were devoted to his glory and pleasure. In fact, the said emperor was greatly pleased and praised her much; and reckoned the cost very high; especially that of his chamber which was hung with tapestry of splendid warp, of silver and gold and silk, on which were figured and represented, the size of life, all his fine conquests, great enterprises, expeditions of war, and the battles he had fought, given, and won, above all, not forgetting the flight of Solyman before Vienna,

and the capture of King François. In short, there was nothing in it that was not exquisite.

But the noble house lost its lustre soon after, being totally pillaged, ruined, and razed to the ground. I have heard say that its mistress, when she heard of its ruin, fell into such distress, anger, and rage that for long she could not be pacified. Passing near there some time later she wished to see the ruins, and gazing at them very piteously with tears in her eyes, she swore that all France should repent of the deed, for never should she be at her ease until that fine Fontainebleau, of which they thought so much, was razed to the ground with not one stone left upon another. In fact, she vomited her rage upon poor Picardy, which felt it in flames. And we may believe that if peace had not intervened, her vengeance would have been greater still; for she had a stern, hard heart, not easily appeased, and was thought to be, on her side as much as on ours, too cruel. But such is the nature of women, even the greatest, who are very quick to vengeance when offended. The emperor, it was said, loved her the better for it.

I have heard it related how, when at Brussels, the emperor, in the great hall where he had called together the general Assembly, in order to give up and despoil himself of his States, after making an harangue and saying all he wished to say to the Assembly and to his son, humbly thanked Queen Marie, his sister, who was seated beside him. On which she rose from her seat and, with a grand curtsey made to her brother with great and grave majesty and composed grace, she said, addressing her speech to the people: "Messieurs, since for twenty-three years it has pleased the emperor, my brother, to give me the charge and government of all his Low Countries, I have employed and used therein all that God, nature, and fortune have given me of means and

graces to acquit myself as well as possible. And if in anything I have been in fault, I am excusable, thinking I have never forgotten what I should remember, nor spared what was proper. Nevertheless, if I have been lacking in any way I beg you to pardon me. But if, in spite of this, some of you will not do so, and remain discontented with me, it is the least thing I care for, inasmuch as the emperor, my brother, is content; for to please him alone has been my greatest desire and solicitude." So saying, and having made another grand curtsey to the emperor, she resumed her seat. I have heard it said that this speech was thought too haughty and defiant, both as relating to her office, and as bidding adieu to a people whom she ought to have left with a good word and in grief at her departure. But what did she care, — inasmuch as she had no other object than to please and content her brother and, from that moment, to quit the world and keep company with that brother in his retreat and his prayers [1556]?

I heard all this related by a gentleman of my brother who was then in Brussels, having gone there to negotiate the ransom of my said brother who was taken prisoner at Hesdin and confined five years at Lisle in Flanders. The said gentleman witnessed this Assembly and all these sad acts of the emperor; and he told me that many persons were rather scandalized under their breaths at this proud speech of the queen; though they dared say nothing, nor let it be seen, for they knew they had to do with a *maîtresse-femme* who would, if irritated, deal them some blow as a parting gift. But here she was, relieved of her office, so that she accompanied her brother to Spain and never left him again, she, and her sister, Queen Éléonore, until he lay in his tomb; the three surviving exactly a year one after the other. The emperor died first, the Queen of France, being the elder, next,

and the Queen of Hungary last,—both sisters having very virtuously governed their widowhood. It is true that the Queen of Hungary was longer a widow than her sister without remarrying; for her sister married twice, as much to be Queen of France, which was a fine morsel, as by prayer and persuasion of the emperor, in order that she might serve as a seal to secure peace and public tranquillity; though, indeed, this seal did not last long, for war broke out again soon after, more cruel than ever; but the poor princess could not help that, for she had brought to France all she could; though the king, her husband, treated her no better for that, but cursed his marriage, as I have heard say.

4. *Louise de Lorraine, wife of Henri III., King of France.*

We can and should praise this princess who, in her marriage, behaved to the king, her husband, so wisely, chastely, and loyally that the tie which bound her to him remained indissoluble and was never loosened or undone, although the king her husband, loving change, went after others, as the fashion is with these great persons, who have a liberty of their own apart from other men. Moreover, within the first ten days of their marriage he gave her cause for discontentment, for he took away her waiting-maids and the ladies who had been with her and brought her up from childhood, whom she regretted much; and more especially the sting went deep into her heart on account of Mlle. de Changy, a beautiful and very honourable young lady, who should never have been banished from the company of her mistress, or from Court. It is a great vexation to lose a good companion and a confidante.

I know that one of the said queen's most intimate ladies was so presumptuous as to say to her one day, laughing and joking, that since she had no children by the king and could



Louise de Lorraine
wife of Henri III

never have them, for reasons that were talked of in those days, she would do well to borrow a third and secret means to have them, in order not to be left without authority when the king should die, but rather be mother to a king and hold the rank and grandeur of the present queen-mother, her mother-in-law. But she rejected this bouffonesque advice, taking it in very bad part and nevermore liking the good lady-counsellor. She preferred to rest her grandeur on her chastity and virtue than upon a lineage issuing from vice: counsel of the world! which, according to the doctrine of Macchiavelli, ought not to be rejected.

But our Queen Louise, so wise and chaste and virtuous, did not desire, either by true or false means, to become queen-mother; though, had she been willing to play such a game, things would have been other than they are; for no one would have taken notice, and many would have been confounded. For this reason the present king [Henri IV.] owes much to her, and should have loved and honoured her; for had she played the trick and produced the child, he would only have been regent of France, and perhaps not that, and such weak title would not have guaranteed us from more wars and evils than we have so far had. Still, I have heard many, religious as well as worldly people, say and hold to this conclusion, namely: that Queen Louise would have done better to play that game, for then France would not have had the ruin and misery she has had, and will have, and that Christianity would have been the better for it. I make this question over to worthy and inquiring discoursers to give their opinion on it; it is a brave subject and an ample one for the State; but not for God, methinks, to whom our queen was so inclined, loving and adoring Him so truly that to serve Him she forgot herself and her high condition. For, being a very beautiful princess (in fact the king took her for

her beauty and virtue), and young, delicate, and very lovable, she devoted herself to no other purpose than serving God, going to prayers, visiting the hospitals continually, nursing the sick, burying the dead, and omitting nothing of all the good and saintly works performed by saintly and devoted good women, princesses, and queens in the times past of the primitive Church. After the death of the king, her husband, she did the same, employing her time in mourning and regretting him, and in praying to God for his soul; so that her widowed life was much the same as her married life.

She was suspected during the lifetime of her husband of leaning a little to the party of the Union [League] because, good Christian and Catholic that she was, she loved all who fought and combated for her faith and her religion; but she never loved these and left them wholly after they killed her husband; demanding no other vengeance or punishment than what it pleased God to send them, asking the same of men and, above all, of our present king; who should, however, have done justice on that monstrous deed done to a sacred person.

Thus lived this princess in marriage and died in widowhood. She died in a reputation most beautiful and worthy of her, having lingered and languished long, without taking care of herself and giving way too much to her sadness. She made a noble and religious end. Before she died she ordered her crown to be placed on the pillow beside her, and would not have it moved as long as she lived; and after her death she was crowned with it, and remained so.

5. *Marguerite de Lorraine, wife of Anne, Duc de Joyeuse.*[1]

Queen Louise left a sister, Madame de Joyeuse, who has imitated her modest and chaste life, having made great

[1] The picture of the Ball at Court, under Henri III., attributed to François Clouet (see chapter ii. of this volume), was given in celebration of her

mourning and lamentation for her husband, a brave, valiant, and accomplished seigneur. And I have heard say that when the present king was so tightly pressed in Brest, where M. du Maine with forty thousand men held him besieged and tied up in a sack, that if she had been in the place of the Duc de Chartres, who commanded within, she would have revenged the death of her husband far better than did the said duke, who on account of the obligations he owed the Duc de Joyeuse, should have done better. Since when, she has never liked him, but hated him more than the plague, not being able to excuse such a fault; though there are some who say that he kept the faith and loyalty he had promised.

But a woman justly or unjustly offended does not listen to excuses; nor did this one, who never again loved our present king; but she greatly regretted the late one [Henri III.] although she belonged to the League; but she always said that she and her husband were under extreme obligations to him. To conclude: she was a good and virtuous princess, who deserves honour for the grief she gave to the ashes of her husband for some time, although she remarried in the end with M. de Luxembourg. Being a woman, why should she languish?

6. *Christine of Denmark, niece of the Emperor Charles V. Duchesse de Lorraine.*

After the departure of the Queen of Hungary no great princess remained near King Philip II. [to whom Charles V. resigned the Low Countries, Naples, and Sicily 1555]

marriage. She advances, with her sweet and modest face (evidently a portrait) in the centre of the picture. Henri III. is seated under a red dais; next him is Catherine de' Medici, his mother, and next to her is Louise de Lorraine, his wife; leaning on the king's chair is Henri Duc de Guise, le Balafré, murdered by Henri III. at Blois in 1588. — Tr.

that was ever in France, answered her most civilly; not with a flourish of words or a great harangue, as Paradin in his History of France represents, for of himself and by nature he was not at all prolix, nor copious in words nor a great haranguer. Moreover, there is no need nor would it be becoming that a king should imitate in his speech a philosopher or an orator; so that the shortest words and briefest answers are best for a king; as I have heard M. de Pibrac say, whose instruction was very sound on account of the learning that was in him. Therefore, whoever reads that harangue of Paradin, made, or presumed to be made by King Henri, should believe none of it, for I have heard several great persons who were present declare that he could not have heard that answer or that discourse as he says he did. Very true it is that the king consoled her civilly and modestly on the desolation she expressed, and told her she had no reason to be troubled, because to secure his safety, and not from enmity, did he wish to keep her son beside him, and put him with his own eldest son to have the same education, same manner of life, same fortune; and since he was of French extraction, and himself French, he could be better brought up at the Court of France, among the French, where he had relations and friends. Nor did he forget to remind her that the house of Lorraine was more obliged to France than any house in Christendom, reminding her of the obligation of the Duc de Lorraine in respect to Duc Charles de Bourgogne, who was killed at Nancy.

But all these fine words and reasons could not console her or make her bear her sorrow patiently. So that, having made her curtsey, still shedding many precious tears, she retired to her chamber, to the door of which the king conducted her; and the next day, before his departure, she went to see him in his chamber to take leave of him, but



Henri III

except the Duchesse de Lorraine, Christine of Denmark, his cousin-german, since called her Highness, who kept him good company so long as he stayed in Flanders, and made his Court shine; for the Court of every king, prince, emperor, or monarch, however grand it be, is of little account if it be not accompanied and made desirable by the Court of queen, empress, or great princess with numerous ladies and damoiselles; as I have well perceived myself and heard discoursed of and said by the greatest personages.

This princess, to my thinking, was one of the most beautiful and accomplished princesses I have ever seen. Her face was very agreeable, her figure tall, and her carriage fine; especially did she dress herself well, — so well that, in her time, she gave to our ladies of France and to her own a pattern and model for dressing the head with a coiffure and veil, called *à la* Lorraine; and a fine sight it was on our Court ladies, who wore it only for fêtes or great magnificences, in order to adorn and display themselves, as did all Lorraine, in honour of her Highness. Above all, she had one of the prettiest hands that were ever seen; indeed I have heard our queen-mother praise it and compare it with her own. She held herself finely on horseback with very good grace, and always rode with stirrup and pommel, as she had learned from her aunt, Queen Mary of Hungary. I have heard say that the queen-mother learned this fashion from her, for up to that time she rode on the plank, which certainly does not show the grace or the fine action with the stirrup. She liked to imitate in riding the queen, her aunt, and never mounted any but Spanish or Turkish horses, barbs, or very fine jennets which went at an amble; I have known her have at one time a dozen very fine ones, of which it would be hard to say which was the finest.

Her aunt, the queen, loved her much, finding her suited to

her humour, whether in the exercises, hunting and other, that she loved, or in the virtues that she knew she possessed. While her husband lived she often went to Flanders to see her aunt, as Mme. de Fontaine told me; but after she became a widow, and especially after they took her son away from her, she left Lorraine in anger, for her heart was very lofty, and made her abode with the emperor her uncle, and the queens her aunts, who gladly received her.

She bore very impatiently the parting from this son, though King Henri made every excuse to her, and declared he intended to adopt him as a son. But not being pacified, and seeing that they were giving the old fellow M. de la Brousse to her son as governor, taking away from him M. de Montbardon, a very wise and honourable gentleman whom the emperor had appointed, having known him for a very long time, this princess, finding how desperate the matter was, came to see King Henri on a Holy Thursday in the great gallery at Nancy, where the Court then was; and with very composed grace and that great beauty which made her so admired, and without being awed or abating in any way her grandeur, she made him a great curtsey, entreating him, and explaining with tears in her eyes (which only made her the more beautiful) the wrong he did in taking her son from her, — an object so dear to her heart and all she had in the world; also that she did not merit such treatment, in view of the great family from which she came; besides which she believed she had never done anything against his service. She said these things so well, with such good grace and reasoning, and made her complaint so gently that the king, who was always courteous to ladies, had great compassion for her, — not only he, but all the princes and the great and the little people who saw that sight.

The king, who was the most respectful king to ladies

could not obtain her request. Therefore, seeing her dear son taken before her eyes and departing for France, she resolved, on her side, to leave Lorraine and retire to Flanders, to her uncle, the emperor (how fine a word!), and to her cousin King Philip and the queens, her aunts (what alliance! what titles!), which she did; and never stirred thence till after the peace made between the two kings, when he of Spain crossed the seas and went away.

She did much for this peace, I might say all; for the deputies, as much on one side as on the other, as I have heard tell, after much pains and time consumed at Cercan [Cateau-Cambrésis] without doing or concluding anything, were all at fault and off the scent, like huntsmen, when she, being either instinct with the divine spirit, or moved by good Christian zeal and her natural good sense, undertook this great negotiation and conducted it so well that the end was fortunate throughout all Christendom. Also it was said that no one could have been found more proper to move and place that great rock; for she was a very clever and judicious lady if ever there was one, and of fine and grand authority; and certainly small and low persons are not so proper for that as the great. On the other hand the king, her cousin [Philip II.], believed and trusted her greatly, esteeming her much, and loving her with a great affection and love; as indeed he should, for she gave his Court great value and made it shine, when otherwise it would have been obscure. Though afterwards, as I have been told, he did not treat her too well in the matter of her estates which came to her as dowry in the duchy of Milan; she having been married first to Duc Sforza, for, as I have heard say, he took and curtailed her of some.

I was told that after the death of her son she remained on very ill terms with M. de Guise and his brother, the

Cardinal, accusing them of having persuaded the king to keep her son on account of their ambition to see and have their near cousin adopted son and married to the house of France; besides which, she had refused some time before to take M. de Guise in marriage, he having asked her to do so. She, who was haughty to the very extreme, replied that she would never marry the younger of a house whose eldest had been her husband; and for that refusal M. de Guise bore her a grudge ever after, — though indeed he lost nothing by the change to Madame his wife, whom he married soon after, for she was of very illustrious birth and granddaughter of Louis XII., one of the bravest and best kings that ever wore the crown of France; and, what is more, she was the handsomest woman in Christendom.

I have heard tell that the first time these two handsome princesses saw each other, they were each so contemplative the one of the other, turning their eyes sometimes crossways, sometimes sideways, that neither could look enough, so fixed and attentive were they to watch each other. I leave you to think what thoughts they were turning in their fine souls; not more nor less than those we read of just before the great battle in Africa between Scipio and Hannibal (which was the final settlement of the war between Rome and Carthage), when those two great captains met together during a truce of two hours, and, having approached each other, they stood for a little space of time, lost in contemplation the one of the other, each ravished by the valour of his companion, both renowned for their noble deeds, so well represented in their faces, their bodies, and their fine and warlike ways and gestures. And then, having stood for some time thus wrapt in meditation of each other, they began to negotiate in the manner that Titus Livius describes so well. That is what virtue is, which

makes itself admired amid hatreds and enmities, as beauty among jealousies, like that of the two ladies and princesses I have just been speaking of.

Certainly their beauty and grace may be reckoned equal, though Mme. de Guise could slightly have carried the day; but she was content without it, — being not at all vain or superb, but the sweetest, best, humblest, and most affable princess that could ever be seen. In her way, however, she was brave and proud, for nature had made her such, as much by beauty and form as by her grave bearing and noble majesty; so much so that on seeing her one feared to approach her; but having approached her one found only sweetness, candour, gayety; getting it all from her grandfather, that good father of his people, and the sweet air of France. True it is, she knew well how to keep her grandeur and glory when need was.

Her Highness of Lorraine was, on the contrary, very vain-glorious, and rather too presumptuous. I saw that sometimes in relation to Queen Marie Stuart of Scotland, who, being a widow, made a journey to Lorraine, on which I went; and you would have said that very often her said Highness was determined to equal the majesty of the said queen. But the latter, being very clever and of great courage, never let her pass the line, or make any advance; although Queen Marie was always gentle, because her uncle, the Cardinal, had warned and instructed her as to the temper of her said Highness. Then she, being unable to be rid of her pride, thought to soothe it a little on the queen-mother when they met. But that indeed was pride to pride and a half; for the queen-mother was the proudest woman on earth when she chose to be. I have heard her called so by many great personages; for when it was necessary to repress the vainglory of some one who wanted to seem of importance

she knew how to abase him to the centre of the earth. However, she bore herself civilly to her Highness, deferring to her much and honouring her; but always holding the bridle in hand, sometimes high, sometimes low, for fear she should get away; and I heard her myself say, two or three times: "That is the most vainglorious woman I ever saw."

The same thing happened when her Highness came to the coronation of the late King Charles IX. at Reims, to which she was invited. When she arrived, she would not enter the town on horseback, fearing she could not thus show her grandeur and high estate; but she put herself into a most superb carriage, entirely covered with black velvet, on account of her widowhood, which was drawn by four Turk horses, the finest that could be chosen, and harnessed all four abreast after the manner of a triumphal car. She sat by the door, very well dressed, but all in black, in a gown of velvet; but her head was white and very handsomely and superbly coiffed and adorned. At the other door of her carriage was one of her daughters, afterwards Mme. la Duchesse de Bavière, and within was the Princesse de Macédoine, her lady of honour.

The queen-mother, wishing to see her enter the courtyard in this triumphal manner, placed herself at a window and said, quite low, "There 's a proud woman!" Then her Highness having descended from her carriage and come upstairs, the queen advanced to receive her at the middle of the room, not a step beyond, and rather nearer the door than farther from it. There she received her very well; because at that time she governed everything, King Charles being so young; and did all she wished, which was certainly a great honour to her Highness. All the Court, from the highest to the lowest, esteemed and admired her much and thought her very handsome, although she was declining in years, being

at that time rather more than forty; but nothing as yet showed it, her autumn surpassing the summer of others.

She died one year after hearing the news that she was Queen of Denmark, from which she came, and that the kingdom had fallen to her; so that before her death she was able to change the title of Highness, she had borne so long, to that of Majesty. And yet, for all that, as I have heard, she was resolved not to go to her kingdom, but to end her days in her dower-house at Tortonia in Italy, where the country-side called her only Madame de Tortonia; she having retired there some time before her death, as much because of certain vows she had made to the saints of those parts as to be near the baths of Tortonia, she being feeble in health and very gouty.

Her practices were fine, saintly, and honourable, to wit: praying God, giving alms, and doing great charity to the poor, above all to widows. This is a summary of what I have heard of this great princess, who, though a widow and very beautiful, conducted herself virtuously. It is true that one might say she was married twice: first with Duc Sforza, but he died at once; they did not live a year together before she was a widow at fifteen. Then her uncle, the Emperor Charles V., remarried her to the Duc de Lorraine, to strengthen his alliance with him; but there again she was a widow in the flower of her age, having enjoyed that fine marriage but a very few years; and those that remained to her, which were her finest and most precious in usefulness, she kept and consumed in a chaste widowhood.

7. *Marie d'Autriche, wife of the Emperor Maximilian II.*

This empress, though she was left a widow quite young and very beautiful, would never marry again, but contained herself and continued in widowhood very virtuously, having

left Austria and Germany, the scene of her empire, after the death of her husband. She returned to her brother, Philip II. in Spain; he having sent for her, and begged her to come and assist him with the heavy burden of his affairs, which she did; being a very wise and judicious princess. I have heard the late King Henri III. say, — and he was a better judge of people than any man in his kingdom, — that to his mind she was one of the ablest and most honourable princesses in the world.

On her way to Spain, after crossing the Germanys, she came to Italy and Genoa, where she embarked; and as it was winter and the month of December when she set sail, bad weather overtook her near Marseille, where she was forced to put in and anchor. But still, for all that, she would not enter the port, neither her own galley nor the others, for fear of causing suspicion or offence. Only once did she enter the town, just to see it. She remained there eight days awaiting fair weather. Her best exercise was in the mornings, when she left her galley (where she slept) and went to hear mass and service at the church of Saint-Victor, with very ardent devotion. Then her dinner was brought and prepared in the abbey, where she dined; and after dinner she talked with her women or with certain gentlemen from Marseille, who paid her all the honour and reverence that were due to so great a princess; for King Henri had commanded them to receive her as they would himself, in return for the good greeting and cheer she had given him in Vienna. So soon as she perceived this she showed herself most friendly, and spoke to them very freely both in German and in French; so that they were well content with her and she with them, selecting twenty especially; among them M. Castellan, called the Seigneur Altivity, captain of the galleys, who was distinguished for having mar-

ried the beautiful Châteauneuf at Court, and also for having killed the Grand-prior, as I shall relate elsewhere.

It was his wife who told me all that I now relate, and discoursed to me about the perfections of this great princess; and how she admired Marseille, thinking it very fine, and went about with her on her promenades. At night she returned to her galley, so that if the fine weather and the good wind came, she might quickly set sail. I was at our Court when news was brought to the king of this passing visit; and I saw him very uneasy lest she should not be received as she ought to be, and as he wished. This princess still lives, and continues in all her fine virtues. She greatly helped and served her brother, as I have been told. Since then she has retired to a convent of women called the "barefooted" [Carmelites], because they wear neither shoes nor stockings. Her sister, the Princess of Spain, founded them.

8. *Blanche de Montferrat, Duchesse de Savoie.*

While I am on this subject of noble widows I must say two words of one of past times, namely: that honourable widow, Madame Blanche de Montferrat, one of the most ancient houses in Italy, who was Duchesse de Savoie and thought to be the handsomest and most perfect princess of her time; also very virtuous and judicious, for she governed wisely the minority of her son and his estates; she being left a widow at the age of twenty-three.

It was she who received so honourably our young King Charles VIII. when he went to his kingdom of Naples, through all her lands and principally her city of Turin, where she gave him a pompous entry, and met him in person, very sumptuously accoutred. She showed she felt herself a great lady; for she appeared that day in magnificent state, dressed in a grand gown of crinkled cloth of

gold, edged with large diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and other precious stones. Round her throat she wore a necklace of very large oriental pearls, the value of which none could estimate, with bracelets of the same. She was mounted on a beautiful white ambling mare, harnessed most superbly and led by six lacqueys dressed in figured cloth of gold. A great band of damoiselles followed her, very richly, daintily, and neatly dressed in the Piedmont fashion, which was fine to see; and after them came a very long troop of noblemen and knights of the country. Then there entered and marched King Charles, beneath a rich canopy, and went to the castle, where he lodged, and where Madame de Savoie presented to him her son, who was very young. After which she made the king a fine harangue, offering her lands and means, both hers and her son's; which the king received with very good heart, and thanked her much, feeling greatly obliged to her. Throughout the town were everywhere seen the arms of France and those of Savoie interlaced in a great lover's-knot, which bound together the two escutcheons and the two orders, with these words: *Sanguinis arctus amor;* as may be read in the "Chronicles of Savoie."

I have heard several of our fathers and mothers, who got it from their parents, and also Mademoiselle the Sénéchale de Poitou, my grandmother, then a damoiselle at Court, affirm that nothing was talked of but the beauty, wisdom, and wit of this princess, when the courtiers and gallants returned from their journey; and, above all, by the king, who seemed, from appearance, to be wounded in his heart.

At any rate, even without her beauty, he had good reason to love her; for she aided him with all the means in her power, and gave up her jewels and pearls and precious stones to send them to him that he might use them and pledge them as he pleased; which was indeed a very great obliga-

tion, for ladies bear a great affection to their precious stones and rings and jewels, and would sooner give and pledge some precious piece of their person than their wealth of jewels — I speak of some, not all. Certainly this obligation was great; for without this courtesy, and that also of the Marquise de Montferrat, a very virtuous lady and very handsome, he would have met in the long run a short shame, and must have returned from the semi-journey he had undertaken without money; having done worse than that bishop of France who went to the Council of Trent without money and without Latin. What an embarkation without biscuit! However, there is a difference between the two; for what one did was out of noble generosity and fine ambition, which closed his eyes to all inconveniency, thinking nothing impossible to his brave heart; while as for the other, he lacked wit and ability, sinning in that through ignorance and stupidity — if it was not that he trusted to beg them when he got there.

In this discourse that I have made of that fine entry, there is to be noted the superbness of the accoutrements of this princess, which seem to be more those of a married woman than a widow. Upon which the ladies said that for so great a king she could dispense with mourning; and also that great people, men and women, gave the law to themselves; and besides, that in those times the widows, so it was said, were not so restricted nor so reformed in their clothes as they have been since for the last forty years; like a certain lady whom I know, who, being in the good graces and delights of a king [probably Diane de Poitiers] dressed herself much *à la* modest (though always in silk), the better to cover and hide her game; and in that respect, the widows of the Court, wishing to imitate her, did the same. But this lady did not reform herself so much, nor to such

austerity, that she ceased to dress prettily and pompously, though always in black and white; indeed there seemed more of worldliness than of widow's reformation about it; for especially did she always show her beautiful bosom. I have heard the queen, mother of King Henri, say the same thing at the coronation and wedding of King Henri III., namely: that the widows in times past did not have such great regard to their clothes and to modesty of actions as they have to-day; the which she said she saw in the times of King François, who wanted his Court to be free in every way; and even the widows danced, and the partners took them as readily as if they were girls or married women. She said on this point that she commanded and begged M. de Vaudemont to honour the fête by taking out Madame la Princesse de Condé, the dowager, to dance; which he did to obey her; and he took the princess to the grand ball; those who were at the coronation, like myself, saw it, and remember it well. These were the liberties that widows had in the olden time. To-day such things are forbidden them like sacrilege; and as for colours, they dare not wear them, or dress in anything but black and white; though their skirts and petticoats and also their stockings they may wear of a tan-gray, violet, or blue. Some that I see emancipate themselves in flesh-coloured red and chamois colour, as in times past, when, as I have heard said, all colours could be worn in petticoats and stockings, but not in gowns.

So this duchess, about whom we have been speaking, could very well wear this gown of cloth of gold, that being her ducal garment and her robe of grandeur, the which was becoming and permissible in her to show her sovereignty and dignity of duchess. Our widows of to-day dare not wear precious stones, except on their fingers, on some mirrors, on some "Hours," and on their belts; but never on their heads

or bodies, unless a few pearls on their neck and arms. But I swear to you I have seen widows as dainty as could be in their black and white gowns, who attracted quite as many and as much as the bedizened brides and maidens of France. There is enough said now of this foreign widow.

9. *Catherine de Clèves, wife of Henri I. de Lorraine, Duc de Guise.*

Madame de Guise, Catherine de Clèves, one of the three daughters of Nevers (three princesses who cannot be lauded enough either for their beauty or their virtues, and of whom I hope to make a chapter), has celebrated and celebrates daily the eternal absence of her husband [Le Balafré, killed at Blois 1588]. But oh! what a husband he was! The none-such of the world! That is what she called him in several letters which she wrote to certain ladies of her intimacy whom she held in esteem, after her misfortune; manifesting in sad and grievous words the regrets of her wounded soul.

10. *Madame de Bourdeille.*

Madame de Bourdeille, issuing from the illustrious and ancient house of Montbéron, and from the Comtes de Périgord and the Vicomtes d'Aunay, became a widow at the age of thirty-seven or thirty-eight, very beautiful (in Guyenne, where she lived, it was believed that none surpassed her in her day for beauty, grace, and noble appearance); and being thus in fine estate and widowed, she was sought in marriage and pursued by three very great and rich seigneurs, to whom she answered: —

"I shall not say as many ladies do, who declare they will never marry, and give their word in such a way that they must be believed, after which nothing comes of it; but I

do say that, if God and flesh do not give me any other wishes than I have at present, it is a very certain thing that I have bade farewell to marriage forever."

And then, as some one said to her, "But, madame, would you burn of love in the flower of your age?" she answered: "I know not what you mean. For up to this hour I have never been even warmed, but widowed and cold as ice. Still, I do not say that, being in company with a second husband and approaching his fire, I might not burn, as you think. But because cold is easier to bear than heat, I am resolved to remain in my present quality and to abstain from a second marriage."

And just as she said then, so she has remained to the present day, a widow these twelve years, without the least losing her beauty, but always nourishing it and taking care of it, so that it has not a single spot. Which is a great respect to the ashes of her husband, and a proof that she loved him well; also an injunction on her children to honour her always. The late M. Strozzi was one of those who courted her and asked her in marriage; but great as he was and allied to the queen-mother, she refused him and excused herself kindly. But what a humour was this! to be beautiful, virtuous, a very rich heiress, and yet to end her days on a solitary feather-bed and blanket, desolate and cold as ice, and thus to pass so many widowed nights! Oh! how many there be unlike this lady — but some are like her, too.

APPENDIX.

I.

(See page 30.)

UNDER Louis XII. the French fleet and the English fleet met, August 10, 1513, off the heights of Saint-Maché, in Lower Bretagne. The English fleet, eighty vessels strong, attacked that of France, which had but twenty. The French made up for numbers by courage and ability. They seized the advantage of the wind, fouled the enemy's ships and shattered them, and sent more than half to the bottom. The Breton Primauguet was captain of "La Cordelière;" the vessel constructed after the orders of Queen Anne; it could carry twelve hundred soldiers besides the crew. He was attacked by twelve English vessels, defended himself with a courage that amounted to fury, sunk a number of the enemy's vessels, and drove off the rest. One captain alone dared approach him again, flinging rockets on board of him, and so setting fire to the vessel. Primauguet might have saved himself in the long-boat, as did some of the officers and soldiers; but that valiant sailor would not survive the loss of his ship; he only thought of selling his life dearly and taking from the English the pleasure of enjoying the defeat of the French. Though all a-fire, he sailed upon the flag-ship of the enemy, the "Regent of England," grappled her, set fire to her, and blew up with her an instant later. More than three thousand men perished in this action by

cannon, fire, and water. It is one of the most glorious pages in our maritime annals.

French editor of "Vie des Dames Illustres,"
Garnier-Frères. Paris.

II.

(See page 44.)

This is doubtless the *Discours merveilleux de la vie, actions, et déportemens de la reine Catherine de Médicis,* attributed to Théodore de Bèze, also to de Serres, but with more probability to Henri Étienne; coming certainly from the hand of a master. It was printed and spread about publicly in 1574 with the date of 1575; inserted soon after in the *Mémoires d'État sous Charles IX.*, printed in 1577 in three volumes, 8vo, and subsequently in the various editions of the *Receuil de diverses pièces pour servir à l'histoire du règne de Henri III.*

French editor.

III.

(See page 91.)

M. de Maison-Fleur was a gentleman of the Bordeaux region, a Huguenot, and a somewhat celebrated poet in his day, whose principal work, *Les Divins Cantiques,* was printed for the first time at Antwerp in 1580, and several times reprinted in succeeding years. For details on this poet, see the *Bibliothèque Française* of the Abbé Goujet.

French editor.

IV.

(See page 92.)

We see, 'neath white attire,
In mourning great and sadness,
Passing, with many a charm
Of beauty, this fair goddess,
Holding the shaft in hand
Of her son, heartless.

And Love, without his frontlet,
Fluttering round her,
Hiding his bandaged eyes
With veil of mourning
On which these words are writ:
DIE OR BE CAPTURED.

V.

(See page 94.)

Translation as nearly literal as possible.

In my sad, sweet song,
In tones most lamentable
I cast my cutting grief
Of loss incomparable;
And in poignant sighs
I pass my best of years.

Was ever such an ill
Of hard destiny,
Or so sad a sorrow
Of a happy lady,
That my heart and eye
Should gaze on bier and coffin?

That I, in my sweet springtide,
In the flower of youth,
All these pains should feel
Of excessive sadness,
With naught to give me pleasure
Except regret and yearning?

That which to me was pleasant
Now is hard and painful;
The brightest light of day
Is darkness black and dismal;
Nothing is now delight
In that of me required.

I have, in heart and eye,
A portrait and an image

That mark my mourning life
And my pale visage
With violet tones that are
The tint of grieving lovers.

For my restless sorrow
I can rest nowhere;
Why should I change in place
Since sorrow will not efface?
My worst and yet my best
Are in the loneliest places.

When in some still sojourn
In forest or in field,
Be it by dawn of day,
Or in the vesper hour,
Unceasing feels my heart
Regret for one departed.

If sometimes toward the skies
My glance uplifts itself,
The gentle iris of his eyes
I see in clouds; or else
I see it in the water,
As in a grave.

If I lie at rest
Slumbering on my couch,
I hear him speak to me,
I feel his touch;
In labour, in repose,
He is ever near me.

I see no other object,
Though beauteous it may be
In many a subject,
To which my heart consents,
Since its perfection lacks
In this affection.

End here, my song,
Thy sad complaint,

Of which be this the burden:
True love, not feigned,
Because of separation
Shall have no diminution.

VI.

(See page 235.)

This book, entitled *Les Marguerites de la Marguerite des princesses,* is a collection of the poems of this princess, made by Simon de La Haie, surnamed Sylvius, her *valet de chambre,* and printed at Lyon, by Jean de Tournes, 1547, 8vo.

The *Nouvelles* of the Queen of Navarre appeared for the first time without the name of the author, under the title: *Histoire des Amants fortunés, dediée à l'illustre princesse, Madame Marguerite de Bourbon, Duchesse de Nivernois,* by Pierre Boaistuau, called Launay. Paris, 1558 4to. This edition contains only sixty-seven tales, and the text has been garbled by Boaistuau. The second edition is entitled: *Heptameron des Nouvelles de très-illustre et très-excellente princesse Marguerite de Valois, reine de Navarre, remis en son vrai ordre,* by Charles Gruget, Paris, 1559, 4to.

French editor.

In 1841 M. Genin published a volume of Queen Marguerite's letters, and in the following year a volume of her letters addressed to François I.

Since then Comte H. de La Ferrière-Percy has made her the subject of an interesting "Study." This careful investigator having discovered her book of expenses, kept by Frotté, Marguerite's secretary, has developed from it a daily proof of the beneficent spirit and inexhaustible liberality of the good queen. The title of the book is: *Marguerite d'Angoulême, sœur de François Ier.* Aubry: Paris, 1862.

The poems of François I., with other verses by his sister and mother, were published in 1847 by M. Aimé Champollion.

Notes to Sainte-Beuve's Essay.

VII.

(See page 262.)

The Ladies given in Discourse VII. appear under the head of "The Widows" in the volume of *Les Dames Galantes*, a very different book from the *Livre des Dames*, which is their rightful place. As Brantôme placed them under the title of Widows, he has naturally enlarged chiefly upon the period of their widowhood.

French editor.

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